DETAILED SUMMARY OF *THE PERSIAN WARS*

BOOK I

CLIO (MUSE OF HISTORY)

PURPOSE: The first Book deals mainly with the early history of Lydia and Persia and with the peoples with whom these nations came into contact. It opens with the avowal of Herodotus that his work will seek the causes of enmity between Greeks and Persians and will record the accomplishments of both Greeks and barbarians.

Conflict between Greeks and Asians is traced back to legendary times. The Trojan War was the first act of aggression by Greeks against Asia; hitherto warfare between the two worlds had been confined to raiding each other for wives. When Helen, wife of the Greek king Menelaus, was stolen, however, the Greeks gathered an army and destroyed the Asian city of Troy. This seemed the height of foolishness to the Persians.

STORY OF CROESUS: After indicating that he is skeptical concerning the legendary origins of the hostility between the two peoples, Herodotus goes on to describe events nearer to his own time, and he begins with Croesus, the last king of independent Lydia. Croesus was the fifth descendant of Gyges, the first king of the Mermnad family. Gyges had usurped the throne by murdering the king and marrying the queen, and the vengeance of the gods was promised for the fifth of his line to sit on the throne—Croesus. Yet it did not seem as if the prophecy would come true, because Croesus was not only fabulously rich, but he had also waged a successful campaign against the cities of the Asiatic Greeks. Croesus confined himself to subduing the mainland cities, however, because he dared not meet the fleets of the Greeks who lived on the islands off the coast of Asia Minor.

Croesus felt himself to be the happiest of men because of his

riches and his conquests, but forebodings of his future fate were to be seen. Solon, an Athenian lawgiver who went into voluntary exile, visited the capital city of Sardis and came to see Croesus. Hearing that Solon was wise, Croesus decided to test him by asking who was "the most enviable of men." Croesus fully expected that he would be named. He was dismayed when Solon answered that "Tellus the Athenian" was because he had many children and grandchildren and had died honorably. Not content, Croesus asked who came second to Tellus. Solon replied that surely Cleobis and Biton did because they were virtuous and had died a good death. When Croesus protested, Solon told him that although the king had riches and was fortunate at the moment, a judgment could not be made upon his happiness until the type of death Croesus would meet became known. Solon, the wise man of Athens, was dismissed by the Lydian king as an ignorant man.

There were other portents, according to Herodotus, to show that the gods were displeased with the overbearing pride of Croesus. Two sons had been born to the king; one was deaf and dumb and the other, Atys, healthy and intelligent. One night Croesus had a dream in which he saw Atys dying from the wound of an iron weapon. Alarmed, the king recalled his son from his position with the army and wouldn't allow him to come into contact with iron weapons. He also ordered Atys to get married, thinking that this would save him from his fate. The dream would not be cheated, however, and Croesus, himself became responsible for the boy's death. Reluctantly allowing him to go on a boar hunt, the father appointed a trusted friend to watch over him. It was this friend who accidentally killed Atys with an iron spear.

This was not the end of the Lydian monarch's misfortunes. Two years after the death of his son, Croesus became suspicious of the growing power of Cyrus, king of the neighboring Persians. Despite the fact that Cyrus had given no provocation, Croesus began to plan a war against him. His first move was an attempt to win the favor of the gods by sending gifts to the shrine of Apollo at Delphi, and by offering sacrifices. Then he put a question to the oracles (who were supposed to be able to tell the future): what would happen if he should start a war with Persia? When the reply informed him that if he began a

war he would put an end to a great empire, Croesus advanced against the Persians.

The empire about to come to an end was Croesus' own. An indecisive battle was fought in Persian territory, after which Croesus retired to his capital, disbanded the army, and called on his Spartan and Egyptian allies to send him aid within five months, for he thought that Cyrus would not dare attack him. This view proved false. Cyrus marched on Sardis and took it before any help could reach Croesus. Thus fell the empire of Croesus: he had fulfilled the fate from which even the god Apollo—so the oracle said—had been powerless to save him.

ATHENS AND SPARTA: Herodotus interrupted this narrative to give some background on the two Greek Big Powers, Athens and Sparta. At the same time as Croesus was looking for allies before his war against Persia, Athens was being ruled for the third time by the tyrant Pisistratus. The first time he had seized power, Pisistratus had been expelled by the combination of two factions, that of Lycurgus and of Megacles. Soon, however, these two leaders disagreed, and Megacles conspired with Pisistratus to achieve power. In order to do this, "they contrived a most ridiculous plan . . . especially if we consider that the Greeks have long been accounted much more acute and free from stupid simplicity than the barbarians. . . ." The device was this: a very tall woman named Phya was dressed up in a suit of armor. This woman then escorted Pisistratus into Athens, proclaiming that she was Pallas Athena, the patron goddess of Athens. The scheme worked, but when he and Megacles fell out, Pisistratus was again exiled. The tyrant, however, was able to return a third time by force of arms.

Sparta did not have to cope with such governmental troubles, for the city had been saved by a lawgiver, Lycurgus. Sparta had been at one time perhaps the most ill-governed of Greek cities. Lycurgus, however, took control of affairs and organized the state so efficiently that a stable government was achieved. Becoming more powerful, Sparta sent to the oracle to ask whether it should make war on all the neighboring Arcadians. The "deceitful" oracle replied that it would be better to invade only the city of Tegea:

> Against Tegea if thou wilt advance,

Upon her fields thy sounding feet shall dance:
And with a rope thou shalt mete out the soil.

The Spartan army of invasion was routed, but the oracle was fulfilled: the surviving Spartan troops worked the soil as slaves.

After many unsuccessful wars against the Tegeans, Sparta did finally subdue them. Sparta soon grew so powerful that by the time the city became allied with Croesus it was the major land power in Greece. As has been mentioned, Croesus' call for help from his allies came too late to make a difference in Lydia's struggle against Cyrus.

HISTORY OF CYRUS: Cyrus was the first Persian king. He achieved power by leading a revolt of his people against his maternal grandfather, Astyages, king of the Medes, to whom the Persians were subject. When Cyrus was born, Astyages—fearing a possible rival in the boy because his father was a Persian—ordered his grandson killed by his lieutenant, Harpagus. Wishing to insure his safety in case of a change in regime, Harpagus ordered one of the king's herdsmen to commit the murder. The herdsman gave in to the pleas of his wife to substitute their stillborn son for the future king and to raise the baby as their own. After a number of years the true story of how Cyrus had been saved became known. Astyages, no longer fearing him, restored him to his parents, but resolved to punish Harpagus for his disobedience. The son of Harpagus was invited to the king's palace, killed, cooked, and served to his father at a royal banquet.

Harpagus was avenged some years later when he advised Cyrus to lead a revolt of the Persians. Astyages appointed Harpagus the commander of his armies in order to crush the rebellion, and was betrayed and defeated. Astyages ended his days as a prisoner of his grandson.

It was at this point that Croesus began to fear the Persians as a threat and attacked them without having received any provocation. Cyrus asked the Greek cities of Asia Minor and the islands off the coast to help him against the Lydians, but they refused. When Croesus had been overthrown, the Ionian cities asked Cyrus for lenient terms. They revolted when he denied their requests. Cyrus sent Harpagus against them, and all the

cities, except Miletus which had a treaty with the Persians, were reduced, though the populations of several cities decided to abandon their homes.

Cyrus' conquests did not end here, for he invaded the Chaldean domains (roughly, Mesopotamia) and besieged and took the capital city of Babylon by diverting the Euphrates river, which flowed through the middle of the city. The river was thereby made shallow enough for the Persian troops to follow its bend into the city. The new province was indeed a rich one; its yield was estimated at one third of all the combined provinces of Cyrus.

The successes Cyrus had achieved gave him a trait in common with Croesus—pride. On his march to Babylon, one of his sacred horses had drowned while attempting to cross the river Gyndes. The Persian king became so furious that he vowed to punish the river by making it impotent. This he did by employing his army in digging three hundred and sixty channels and allowing the river to disperse itself into them. The Persian army spent a whole summer performing this task.

Cyrus met his end when he began a war with the Massagetae, a people who inhabited what is now part of South Central Russia. Tomyris, the queen of the Massagetae, attempted to dissuade Cyrus from war, but he refused. When it was certain that a conflict was near, Tomyris proposed that the armies should be allowed to meet either in her territory or within the limits of the Empire. Croesus, whose life had been spared by Cyrus, convinced the Persian monarch to enter the realm of Tomyris and told him of a scheme to win the battle by guile. The plan worked, but the queen hastily gathered another army and promised Cyrus his fill of blood. When the armies came together in a battle which was judged by Herodotus to be "the hardest that was ever fought between barbarians," the Persians were defeated and Cyrus was killed.

CUSTOMS OF THESE PEOPLES: It is with this battle between the Massagetae and the Persians that the first Book ends. Throughout his narration of intrigues and battles, Herodotus frequently pauses to describe the customs of the countries under examination. Speaking about Lydia, for example, he mentions that their customs resemble those of the Greeks. The

Lydians were also the first people, so far as is known, to use coins. The Persians, on the other hand, were unlike the Greeks in their customs. The Persian religion did not conceive of the gods as having a nature like that of man, as the Greek religion did. For this reason, they did not have altars or images. When sacrificing, the Persian had to pray not only for himself, but for all his countrymen and for his king. Persian education was also unlike the Greek. A son was not admitted into his father's presence until he was five years old. From that age until he was twenty, the young Persian lad was instructed in three things: how to ride a horse, how to shoot a bow, and to tell the truth.

BABYLONIAN CUSTOMS: The Babylonians had customs worthy of note in regard to marriage. All marriageable women were sold to the highest bidder, and the bidding began with the most beautiful girl. What was received for these was used to provide a dowry for the ones who were not so beautiful, thus making them more desirable. This custom, however, was discontinued when the Persians conquered Babylon. Another custom which was considered wise by Herodotus was that of taking a sick man to the market place; there passers-by who had had similar afflictions, or who knew of a cure, could give advice and comfort to the sufferer. Herodotus also reports a custom among the Babylonians which he labels "infamous." Every woman of Babylon at least once in her life had to go to the temple of Aphrodite (or Mylitta, the Goddess of Love) and offer herself to the first man who threw a coin of whatever value into her lap. A woman could not leave her place at the temple until she had been chosen by a stranger, and so some women spent as many as three or four years fulfilling this obligation imposed upon them.

AN UNUSUAL CUSTOM: The Massagetae, the people who defeated Cyrus, also had a noteworthy custom. When a man became quite old, all his relatives gathered in order that they might kill him ceremoniously and eat his flesh. This was considered by them to be the happiest possible death.

COMMENT: Book I introduces the modern reader to the tone of ancient life. In addition to relating many of the customs, traditions, and legends of various lands, Herodotus examines political history: the dynastic changes, the types of government, the wars of conquest.

The governments of the "barbarian," that is, the non-Greek peoples were invariably despotisms of the most absolute kind, and the monarchs thought of themselves as gods. Thus these oriental kings had the right to mete out reward or punishment, life or death, without restraint. They felt they had the moral right to kill an innocent boy and to serve him to his father. They could afford to halt a campaign in order to "punish" a river.

Kings in such situations were apt to commit the sin of pride, but Herodotus shows that this particular sin—and this is a recurring theme in the *Histories*—is invariably punished. Cyrus was proud because no nation could resist him in war, but the Persian king met a terrible end. Croesus was proud of his enormous wealth (and the expression "as rich as Croesus" is still in use today). It was his pride which led him to think he was the happiest man on earth and which led him to dismiss Solon as ignorant. ("As wise as Solon," is another expression which has become proverbial.) Croesus paid for his pride with the life of his son and with his kingdom.

A belief in fate was another characteristic trait of these ancient peoples. The fate of a man was thought to be determined even before his birth. No matter what a person did, king or slave, he could not escape his fate. This explains why the cult of the god Apollo was so widespread in the ancient world. The priests and priestesses at the shrines of Apollo, especially the one in the Greek city of Delphi, were believed to be able to reveal the future. Those who wished to ask the oracle some question about how a step they were planning to take was likely to turn out would send gifts to the shrine in an effort to influence the god. When the suppliant thought that he had sent enough gifts, the question was put to Apollo. An answer would be given by the god, who was thought to speak through his priest. This reply was usually given in verse form, and it would admit of several interpretations. Thus when Croesus asked the oracle what would happen if he made war on the Persian Empire, he was told that a great empire would fall. Croesus naturally assumed that he would gain the victory, but it was his empire which was destroyed.

Herodotus takes for granted that the reader will know about the composition of the ancient empires. They were not made up of one people. Many nations were added piecemeal to an empire by conquest. What is referred to as the Persian Empire, for instance, included Greeks, Medes, Lydians, Capadocians, and Armenians, as well as others. Persia, in fact, was a relatively small area which gave its name to the whole empire because it was the center of power and of administration. The army was formed of contingents from all the subject states, and the Persian navy at the time of the wars with Greece was composed mostly of Asiatic Greeks and of Phoenicians, a sea-going people from the area which forms present-day Lebanon.

BOOK II

EUTERPE (MUSE OF FLUTE-PLAYERS)

Among the many provinces of the mighty Persian Empire was the ancient land of Egypt. Herodotus visited the country and was impressed with its wonders, especially with the magnificent achievements of the pharaohs. The second Book of the *Histories* is devoted to a description of Egypt—its topography, customs, religion, and history—before the successful Persian invasion. Besides giving an eyewitness account of Egypt as it was in his own day, Herodotus repeated stories of Egyptian history as they were told to him by the priests who believed them to be true.

THE LAND: Ancient Egypt centered around the river Nile, the stream which was the lifeblood of Egyptian agriculture. The land around the river to the south ("upper" Egypt) was for the most part flat and dry. To the north ("lower" Egypt), the land of the Delta was marshy as the river split into five mouths before it emptied into the Mediterranean Sea. The marshiness of the land led many Egyptians to think that this section of their country was once part of the sea, and that the deposition of earth by the Nile over a long period of time had made it fit for habitation.

The Nile accounted for Egypt's existence as a viable economic

unit, for nowhere in the ancient world, according to Herodotus, was agriculture so easy. Farmers did not have to plough land. They merely waited until the river rose. When it retreated, grains and vegetables would be sown and harvested. A complex system of canals also aided agriculture by carrying vital water to places which the river could not reach. The life of Egypt was so bound up with the Nile that the opinion which maintained that the country consisted of all the land below Elephantine (Assuan) which the Nile overflowed was even seconded by an oracle.

The cause of the Nile's overflow remained a mystery in antiquity, but three explanations were usually advanced in attempting to account for the phenomenon. First there was the view that during the spring winds blew in a direction opposing the flow of the river, thus preventing it from emptying into the sea and causing it to overflow. A second saw the Nile overflowing because it was part of an ocean which flowed around the world, while a third saw it as a result of melting snows near the source of the river. These three reasons Herodotus rejected and advanced a fourth, which attributed the phenomenon to variations in the course of the sun.

In addition to making agriculture possible in such a dry climate, the Nile also served as a connecting link between various parts of the country. Navigation of the river, however, posed a problem, for the current was swift and rocks projected out into the water at spots. There was no choice but to make part of the journey by land where navigation was impossible. When a boat went upstream, it had to be pulled by means of ropes. In sailing downstream, a float was usually attached to the front of the boat while a weight attached to its stern was dragged along the river bottom in order to keep the vessel on a steady course.

RELIGION AND CUSTOMS: The Egyptians were a polytheistic people. Many of their gods and rites bore similarities to Greek gods and practices, and Herodotus was of the opinion that his countrymen had been influenced by the Egyptians, rather than vice versa. An Egyptian god named Heracles, for instance, was one of the oldest deities known. Nothing, however, could be heard about the Greek hero Heracles in Egypt. The conclusion therefore was that the Greeks had taken the name of Heracles from the Egyptians.

Nor was the story that the Egyptians had attempted to sacrifice the Greek Heracles a credible one, for the Egyptians were allowed to kill only pigs (which were considered unclean) and cattle with certain markings. Many animals were sacred to the natives, cows being the most holy, but cats and rams, as well as others, were also revered. The people had a high regard for animals in general, vows being taken and money being set aside for their care. The Egyptian counterpart of Zeus (the chief Greek god), Ammon, was even represented as a ram because it was said that he once appeared to Heracles dressed in the head and fleece of a newly-killed ram.

Phallic rites as well as oracles were common in Egypt, and the Egyptians maintained that these were the origin of similar cults in Greece and other countries. They explained the dissemination of the oracles by claiming that two priestesses had been stolen and sold in foreign lands by Phoenicians. The Greek god Dionysus was also said to have originated in Egypt with the god Osiris.

Yet the Egyptians performed many practices in a manner almost directly opposed to the procedures followed by their neighbors. Whereas others wrote from left to right, they wrote from right to left; they could not use wheat, barley, and beans for food. Dough was worked with the feet while mud and dung were picked up with the hands. Unlike most other peoples, the Egyptians also circumcised their children.

Among the notable customs of the Egyptians was the practice of embalming their dead. There were several ways—depending upon price—in which this was done. The most expensive procedure involved drawing out the brain and the intestines from the corpse and filling the abdomen with various spices. After being buried in saltpeter for seventy days, the body was wrapped in fine linen and coated with a gum. In less expensive treatments, the brain and intestines were not drawn out. The mummy of a relative was usually put in a case and kept in the home.

The Egyptians were constantly aware of death. At higher-class banquets, wooden corpses in coffins were sometimes shown to the guests; they were then told to enjoy themselves, for they would one day be like the images. Egyptians did, however, be-

lieve in an immortal soul. Herodotus relates that they thought that after death, one's soul entered the body of an animal which was just being born. When that animal died, it would enter the body of another, and so on until it had inhabited the bodies of all types of creatures. (Perhaps this accounted for the respect the Egyptians had for animals.) After three thousand years, the Egyptians maintained, the soul again entered the body of a human.

Herodotus also described animals he saw or heard of in Egypt, but he does not do well with some of them. Crocodiles—considered holy by some Egyptians, but not by others—were described quite incorrectly, for he wrote that the animal has no tongue, does not move its lower jaw, and is blind in the water. Flying snakes were described also, but none were actually seen: the snakes, he was told, were eaten by ibises making their yearly flight from Arabia to Egypt.

EGYPTIAN HISTORY: Thus far in Book II, Herodotus wrote as an observer. For his account of the country's history, however, he had to rely upon stories told to him by natives of the country.

The first king of Egypt was Min (Menes). Min was remembered chiefly for having diverted part of the Nile river and for building the city of Memphis where the bed dried. (Scholars identify this king as the same who united upper and lower Egypt, but Herodotus does not mention this.) Three hundred and thirty kings followed Min; the most noteworthy of these was the last, Moeris. (Or so the manuscript says. Actually the "pyramid kings" beginning with Cheops are placed later, but should have followed here. Some scholars suppose that a careless scribe misplaced the section.) Moeris was best known for creating a large artificial lake by having a depression dug and then transporting water there by means of canals from the Nile. Two large pyramids were built in the depression before it was flooded, and these rose out of the water to the same height as the lake was deep.

Sesostris was the next king whose achievements were considered great by the Egyptians. A warrior, Sesostris conquered many nations, and he erected pillars to commemorate each of his victories. He was supposed to have reached Thrace on one

of his marches of conquest. (There is no record of this invasion of Europe, and probably many of the exploits attributed to Sesostris were the deeds of Rameses II.) The building of the country's extensive canal system and the equal distribution of all the land in Egypt were attributed to Sesostris.

Pheros succeeded Sesostris to the throne, but he was not a warlike king. He was supposed to have been struck blind for ten years because he had angrily thrown a spear into the Nile when it rose to an unprecedented height. When the time of his punishment for this act was over, an oracle told him that his sight would be restored if he washed his eyes with the urine of a woman who had been faithful to her husband. The pharaoh then began his quest: first he tried his wife's urine, and then, his condition remaining unchanged, he washed with that of other women. When his sight finally returned, Pheros locked up all the women who had failed to cure him, including his wife, and burned them. He married the one who had restored his ability to see.

The Egyptians maintained that Pheros' successor, Proteus, was involved in the Greek legend of the Trojan War. According to the Egyptians, the story went as follows: After Alexander (Paris), son of King Priam of Troy, had seduced Helen, wife of the King of Sparta, he was driven to Egypt by a storm. Brought before Proteus, Alexander attempted to lie about the situation. The truth coming out, Proteus ordered Alexander to leave Egypt, but would allow him to take neither Helen nor the wealth he had stolen from her husband. Proteus intended to hold Helen until her husband came for her. Meanwhile, a Greek force landed at Troy and demanded the return of Helen, but the Trojans protested that they did not have her. It was only after Troy had been taken that the Greeks, according to the Egyptians, believed that Helen had been in Egypt all the time and claimed her. Herodotus asserted that it was unreasonable to suppose that the Trojans would not have given Helen up if they had been able to do so, for they would have been spared a long, bitter war, and eventually the destruction of their city.

Rhampsinitus succeeded Proteus as king. An interesting story illustrating the character of this king was told by the Egyptians. Wishing to insure that his treasure would be safe, the pharaoh

contracted to have a chamber of stone built to house it. The builder, knowing the purpose of his labor, set a large stone so that it could be easily removed. Shortly before his death, the builder called his two sons and told them the secret.

The boys at once began to plunder the treasure, and the king, unable to discover how the thieves entered, set traps around his hoard in the chamber. When one thief became caught in a trap, he warned his brother to cut off his head and remove it from the scene, for only by taking such a drastic step could detection be avoided. The next day Rhampsinitus was furious: he ordered the headless body strung up and a guard posted near it to see if anyone came to grieve. Meanwhile the surviving thief was ordered by his mother to rescue the body or she would reveal the secret of his identity. When the brother accomplished this task without being apprehended, the pharaoh was in even greater rage; he resolved to capture the thief at all costs.

His plan was this: he told his daughter to sit among the prostitutes and to ask each man who came to her what had been the most clever exploit of his life. If the thief came, she was to hold his hand and not let him go. Hearing of this, the thief cut the arm from a corpse, hid it on him, went to the king's daughter, and confessed everything. It was dark in the room when the thief held out the dead man's arm to be grasped. The girl clung to it and called out while the thief made good his escape. On hearing of this exploit, the king not only publicly pardoned the thief, but, calling him the most sharp-witted of men, gave him his daughter for a wife.

After the reign of Rhampsinitus, Cheops (Khufru) and his brother Chephren (Khafru) who came after him reigned for a total of one hundred and six years. (This is the chronology of the text as we have it, but these pharaohs actually came before the others. The sections may have been misplaced.) Egyptians considered these kings wicked because they closed the temples and made the people work at building the enormous pyramids in which they were to be entombed. (Herodotus gives the dimensions of these accurately.)

Mycerinus, son of Cheops, disapproved of the behavior of his father and his uncle and re-opened the temples when he succeeded to the throne. In addition to rendering this service, he

was reputed to be extremely just in his judgments. He was not destined to live long, however, for the oracle told him that he had defied fate: Egypt was to be miserable for one hundred and fifty years, yet the pharaoh's reign had reversed the trend established by his father and his uncle before the allotted time.

(Herodotus' narrative of this point goes from about 3,000 to around 700 B.C. due to the error in chronology mentioned above.)

Egypt lost its independence when it was unable to resist attacks by the "Ethiopians" ("Ethiopia" was the Greek name for everything south of Egypt) and Assyrians. When the Egyptians were finally able to free themselves, the country was divided into twelve parts and a king was set up to head each part. These twelve kings agreed to share among themselves and never to allow a disproportionate amount of power to concentrate in any one king's hands. There had been a prophecy. however, which said that one among them would pour a libation to the gods out of a bronze vessel and would achieve power over the whole of Egypt. For this reason they all worshiped together and all poured libations from gold cups. One day a cupbearer brought only eleven cups to the kings and. without thinking, one of them, Psammetichus. took his bronze helmet and poured a libation.

Alarmed, his colleagues drove him from his throne. Psammetichus vowed vengeance, and an oracle promised it would be his when bronze men appeared from the sea. When these came in the persons of shipwrecked Greek and Carian (Caria was in Asia Minor) pirates wearing bronze armor, Psammetichus enlisted their aid and conquered Egypt. Psammetichus settled the Greeks in the country and sent them Egyptian children in order that the settlers might teach them Greek.

Psammetichus reigned for fifty-four years and was reputed to be a wise king. He joined with his former colleagues in building a great memorial, the Labyrinth. He also set out to learn which were the most ancient people in the world. Two children were to be raised by a shepherd who was ordered not to speak to them nor let them hear any spoken word. When the children spoke their first word, report of it was to be made to the king. After two years, the shepherd came into the hut in which the

children were being raised, and they asked him for "bekos." After hearing the word repeated several times, the man reported it to the king. "Bekos," it seems, was the Phrygian word for bread. (Phrygia was a region in Asia Minor.) After this experiment, the Egyptians no longer thought of themselves as the most ancient people, but bowed to the Phrygians.

Of the kings who succeeded Psammetichus, only Apries was able to approach him in splendor. When he reigned for twenty-five years, however, one of his lieutenants named Amasis (Ahmose) led a successful army revolt against him. It was under Amasis that Egypt reached its highest degree of prosperity. Although Amasis was supposed to have led a dissolute personal life, his character was amply demonstrated when he sent gifts only to those oracles who had called him a thief, while to those who deemed him an honest man, he gave nothing and openly called them false. This king was also friendly to the Greeks, giving them the city of Naucratis in which to trade with the Egyptians.

COMMENT: The second Book gives the reader invaluable information regarding the customs and religion of ancient Egypt. Religious practices, agriculture, diet, pyramids, temples—all are described and elaborated upon.

Herodotus recorded both what he saw as a traveler in Egypt and what was told to him. Acting as an historian, Herodotus tells the reader exactly when he stops functioning as an eyewitness and starts repeating a sort of folk-history, the degree of reliability of which is difficult to gauge. Some of the fables he believed, not having any way to check their veracity, but some he repeated even though he wrote that they seemed untrue. It must be remembered that Herodotus spent only a few months in the country and that he did not know the language. Speaking as a foreigner uninitiated into Egyptian society, his descriptions of Egyptian life and Egyptian history are for the most part accurate, despite the difficulty with chronology.

By describing the various rites and gods of the Egyptians, Herodotus attempted to identify Egyptian and Greek deities and also sought to trace various Greek religious practices to Egyptian sources. In identifying, for instance, Zeus

with Ammon, Apollo with Horus, or Demeter (Greek goddess of the earth) with Isis, the implication seems to have been that all religions have some common gods and goddesses who fulfill the same functions in various societies. This was in harmony with Herodotus' belief that all religions are equally sacred.

He also asserted that various nations adopted gods and rites from one another. In fact, he goes so far as to say that the names of almost all the Greek gods originated in Egypt. Certain Egyptian and Greek phallic rites which resembled each other, Herodotus pronounced definitely as coming to Greece from Egypt, for that country had them first and it was unrealistic to assign the strong similarities to chance. Although the explanations may not be wholly convincing at times, they at least point to an attempt to do some original thinking.

Besides the author's strong points, some weaknesses are also revealed in this second Book. Herodotus was not a naturalist, as is evident from his statement that a crocodile has no tongue and does not move its lower jaw. In describing the course of the river Nile, he shows himself to be a poor geographer. During his time, however, knowledge of the earth's surface was strictly limited. Herodotus also thought that Egyptian farmers did not have to work hard for their crops, but, though it is true that agriculture was easier in the Nile valley than in other places, it was not as simple as he made it out to be.

BOOK III

THALIA (MUSE OF COMEDY)

CAMBYSES: Egypt was added to the Persian Empire through the efforts of Cambyses, the son of Cyrus. A disagreement with Egypt was provoked when Cambyses asked the Egyptian king, Amasis, to send him his daughter, presumably as a concubine. When Amasis delivered the daughter of Apries, the king whom he had overthrown, in an attempt to spare his own child, war was not far off.

It came when an important foreign mercenary, Phanes of Halicarnassus, deserted the Egyptian cause and defected to Cambyses. Once Phanes reached the Persians, he advised them to ask the Arabians for a pledge of safe-passage across their territory. Cambyses took the advice, won over some tribal chieftains to his side, and crossed into Egypt from Arabia.

When the two armies met, the Egyptians were routed after a hard fight. Before Cambyses marched on Memphis, however, he sent a ship to the city asking it to surrender. No sooner had the vessel—which was from the city of Mytilene and formed part of the Greek contingent of his navy—arrived than the Egyptians killed its crew. Memphis was taken soon after, and seven royal judges ordered two thousand noble Egyptian youths to be killed in reprisal for the men of Mytilene. Although the Persians were willing to allow the Egyptian king Psammenitus (his father Amasis had died) to retain the throne as a vassal, he attempted to stir up rebellion and killed himself before the Persians were able to punish him.

Cambyses showed his cruel nature in the city of Memphis. He ordered the mummy of Amasis to be taken from its tomb and had it scourged, stabbed, and burned. The burning of a body was an impious act in the eyes of both Persians and Egyptians, but Cambyses would not relent. This action was but a preview of his later conduct in Egypt, for he committed other heinous crimes before he went mad and died from a sword wound.

Having taken Egypt, Cambyses planned three more campaigns in order to enlarge his empire: against the Charchedonians, a Phoenician people of North Africa, against the Ammonians of upper Egypt, and against a people identified as the "long-lived Ethiopians."

THE ETHIOPIANS: Before he marched south against the Ammonians and the Ethiopians, Cambyses sent spies to find out what manner of people the Ethiopians were, for they were little known to men of the north. He sent gifts to them, but they rejected as useless everything except the wine. Then the Ethiopians told the spies something about their way of life. Their food consisted of meat and milk, and most of them lived to be one hundred and twenty years of age. Gold they had in abundance, but bronze was extremely rare in their country. When someone died, his body was dried, covered with plaster, painted

to resemble a man, and encased in a pillar of crystal. The pillar was kept in the home of the next of kin for a year, during which time it received sacrifices. After the year was up, the pillar was brought out and set up among similar ones around the city. After showing the spies the marvels of their country, they gave them an enormous bow to take back to Cambyses and said he could invade when he had overwhelming numbers of men who could bend such weapons as they did.

THE MARCH: Cambyses was furious when he received the spies' report, and he resolved to march against the Ethiopians, but all three of the campaigns he had planned either did not materialize or came to an unhappy end. The Phoenician contingent which made up the largest part of his fleet refused to sail against its own people at Carchedon (near Tunis), and the king did not think it politic to force them to do so. Cambyses did actually attempt his march southwards towards the Ammonians and the Ethiopians, however. He separated fifty thousand men from his main army and gave them orders to march to the city of Ammon, to enslave the people there, and to burn the oracle of Zeus which was located in that city. This force moved towards its destination, but was never heard from again. The Ammonians said that a sudden sandstorm destroyed it. As for the Ethiopian expedition, Cambyses did not carry enough provisions for crossing the desert. He refused to turn back even after the soldiers had eaten everything, including the beasts of burden, and so they took to eating themselves. Among every ten men, one who was chosen by lot was eaten. Alarmed at this new development, Cambyses gave up his designs and returned to Memphis.

APIS: He was startled on his arrival in the city: everyone was celebrating. Cambyses thought that the people were overjoyed at his ill-success, but the reason for the celebration was that the god Apis had made one of his infrequent appearances on earth as a calf. At first Cambyses would not believe this was the reason for the people's happiness, but when the priests (who had decided that the calf was a god by certain markings) assured him it was so, he asked to see Apis.

When Apis was led before Cambyses, the king drew his sword, struck the calf in the thigh, and watched it bleed. Convinced now that the Egyptians were trying to make a fool of him, he had the priests scourged and ordered his troops to kill any

Egyptian found celebrating. Thus Apis died and was buried, and the festival came to an end.

HIS MADNESS: Cambyses was supposed to have gone mad after having killed the calf, though there were doubts about his sanity before that incident. (He also had epilepsy.) He dreamed one night that a messenger came to tell him that a man named Smerdis was sitting on the throne with his head reaching to the sky. Cambyses had a brother named Smerdis and so became alarmed by this omen; he ordered one of his lieutenants, Prexaspes, to kill his brother secretly. Afterwards Cambyses married two of his own sisters and had one of them killed. His madness did not stop with acts of cruelty towards his own family. He asked Prexaspes to tell him what the Persians thought of their king, and his friend answered truthfully that they thought he drank too much. Cambyses set out to prove that wine did not affect his control over his senses. When he was drinking one night he picked up a bow and told Prexaspes that he would aim for Prexaspes' son's heart: if he missed the target, he did not have control of himself. His aim was true, however, and the arrow pierced the boy's heart.

The Persian monarch acted in other ways which seemed to indicate that he was mad. Among other things, he opened ancient tombs and examined the bodies. He also mocked Egypt's gods and burned many sacred images. It was this last act which convinced Herodotus that Cambyses was insane, for only someone out of his head would ridicule the customs and religion of other people. In an effort to prove that all people think that their own customs are best, Herodotus told a story about an experiment conducted by Darius, the king who was to follow Cambyses to the throne. One day Darius called in some of his Greek soldiers and asked them for what sum they would eat their fathers when they died. The Greeks were horrified and said they would not do it for any sum. In their presence, Darius called in some of his Indian soldiers whose custom it was to eat their fathers after death, and asked them how much they would take to burn them instead. The Indians were also horrified and protested that such an idea was unthinkable to them. Herodotus drew from this the moral that the poet Pindar had been correct when he said that law (custom) ruled men.

HIS DEATH: The death of Cambyses seemed to have been in

divine retribution for his sins. His troubles began when a herald arrived from his capital city of Susa proclaiming that the Persians should now obey Smerdis, brother of the king. When Cambyses heard the news he was stunned, for he had secretly ordered his brother's death. Upon further investigation he learned that the impostor was a man of the Magian tribe of the Medes whose true name was also Smerdis. (The Magians were the priestly tribe of the Medes.) Learning that this Smerdis was a priest, Cambyses suddenly understood the meaning of the dream which had led him to have his brother murdered: the one in which a messenger proclaimed that Smerdis sat on the throne with his head reaching toward the sky. Lamenting his haste in having his brother killed, Cambyses rode out against the usurper. On his way, however, his sword accidentally pierced his thigh. Knowing he was dying a slow death, Cambyses called in his Persians, told them about his brother and the impostor, and set a curse on them if they did not win the throne back from the Medes. Soon after, he died of the wound which was said by Herodotus to be in the same place where the king had struck the Egyptian calf-god, Apis.

THE HISTORY OF SAMOS: While these events were taking place in Egypt, the Greek world was being disturbed by a local tyrant—Polycrates of Samos. (Samos is an island in the Aegean Sea. Herodotus wrote that it was famous for three engineering marvels: a tunnel which brought water to the city of Samos through a mountain; a breakwater which enclosed the harbor; a very large temple.) Polycrates had gained control of the island through a revolution; at first he shared power with his two brothers, but he later killed one and drove the other into exile. He then built up the power of Samos to a high degree and became a force to reckon with in international politics. His design was to rule the sea.

Although Polycrates had once had an alliance with Amasis of Egypt, he sent forty ships to Cambyses for service against that ruler. His reason for doing so was to get rid of all those who might possibly be disloyal to him, for he asked Cambyses not to send the ships back. The crews of the vessels guessed for what purpose they were being sent to the wars and sailed to Sparta to ask for help in returning to their homeland.

The Spartans were persuaded to send an expedition to Samos.

This was significant because it was the first time that Sparta had taken such a direct interest in events so far from home. The Samians, however, made this an unpleasant experience for the Spartan force, and, finding themselves unable to conquer the island, the Spartans sailed for home. The exiles who had provoked the war took to plundering in the Aegean.

Thus far Polycrates' luck held, but he was fated to meet a bad end. Oroetes, the Persian governor (satrap) of Sardis, disliked having such a powerful neighbor, and so vowed to kill him. Knowing the ambition of Polycrates to make Samos the major sea power, Oroetes contrived to play upon the tyrant's need for money. He wrote the Samian a letter telling him that he wished to defect from Cambyses. Oroetes also told him that he would bring along eight large chests of gold—enough to satisfy Polycrates' ambition—if he were granted asylum and a portion of the treasure. Polycrates was then lured over to meet with the satrap and to see the treasure. (Polycrates' daughter had had an evil dream and warned her father not to go, but he angrily rebuffed her. When Oroetes got Polycrates in his power, he had him killed and his body crucified.

With the death of Polycrates, one of his lieutenants, Maeandrius, attempted to set up a democracy at Samos. Encountering opposition from aristocratic elements, he had many of his opponents imprisoned. They were later massacred by his brother Lycaretus. Matters stood at this point when the Persians invaded the island.

The Persians decided to undertake the Samos adventure at the instigation of Polycrates' exiled brother, Syloson. Although no resistance was offered to them at first and Maeandrius agreed to leave peaceably, the people rose up against the conquerors. The Persians, however, quelled the uprising with great loss of life.

Thus it was that the Greek island of Samos was absorbed into the Persian Empire. The loss of such a major sea power could not but stun the Greek world: now it was more exposed than ever to Persian attack.

THE ACCESSION OF DARIUS: The Persian Empire, meanwhile, had not been thrown into confusion after the death of Cambyses, for when the king told his lieutenants that his brother

had been killed, they refused to believe him, especially since Prexaspes, the murderer, denied everything. Smerdis the impostor reigned for seven months without any problem. He was well liked because he relieved all parts of the Empire from the duty of furnishing soldiers and tribute for three years.

The deposition of Smerdis came during his eighth month in power. Seven high-ranking Persians, including Otanes, the one who discovered the fraud, and Darius, son of the governor of Persia, entered the palace, killed Smerdis, and slaughtered all the Magians they could find. The Persian people were made aware of what was happening, and they followed the example of the seven conspirators.

When the action had been completed, the Persians found themselves without a government, for Cambyses had left no heirs. This being the situation, there then took place, according to Herodotus, a (typically Greek) debate as to what form of government the Empire should be given. Otanes argued that absolute power corrupted, and that, therefore, a democracy should be instituted instead of a monarchy. Another of the seven who had deposed Smerdis, Megabyzus, insisted that a democracy would turn into a worse tyranny than a monarchy could ever become: he was in favor of an oligarchy. Darius, however, disagreed with both of these views. In championing monarchy, he pointed out that the Persians had become free under the leadership of a king, Cyrus.

Darius' argument won favor, and it was decided to choose a king from among the former conspirators, excluding Otanes. Arrangements were made so that the new king had to choose his wives from among the families of the other six; honor was also rendered to Otanes because he had been the originator of the revolt.

The method devised to choose the new king was this: the six men involved rode outside the city at daybreak, and the one whose horse neighed first was to be the new monarch. Darius ordered his groom to take care that his horse would be the first to neigh. The groom succeeded in carrying out the order, and Darius was made king.

ADMINISTRATIVE REFORM: When Darius came to the throne, he undertook to reform the administration of the Empire. A

division into twenty provinces was effected, and a governor (satrap) was assigned to each of them. In addition, Darius fixed the annual tribute which each province was obliged to pay. Prior to this, annual gifts had been made to the king, but there had been no set amount. It was because of this step that the Persians were wont to call Darius a shopkeeper, Cambyses a master, and Cyrus a father: Cyrus was merciful to them, Cambyses was cruel, and Darius turned a profit on everything.

In examining these reforms, Herodotus also described the remote areas, such as northwestern India and Arabia, from which some of the tribute came. The author repeated some obviously fantastic stories told to him by Persians and Phoenicians. In relating how the Indians obtained gold to pay Darius, for instance, Herodotus tells about giant ants which cast up sand full of gold dust. The Indians gathered the sand into bags and had to flee before the ants assembled and gave chase. The Arabians had a more difficult time in getting spices such as frankincense, for speckled winged snakes guarded the trees on which it grew. After having made a survey of where most of the world's choice items came from, Herodotus concluded that the best things came from the remotest parts.

Herodotus returned to the narrative after this digression, and he immediately found a personal motive for the wars which were soon to begin between east and west. Darius did not pursue a warlike policy at first, but he was provoked into action by a Greek physician, Democedes, who had once been a slave. Democedes had cured Darius' foot when it had seemed to be beyond hope, and for that reason the king respected him and treated him well. The Greek, originally from Croton in Southern Italy, desired to return to his homeland. His chance came when Atossa, one of the king's wives, asked him to remove a tumor on her breast. Democedes promised to cure her if she would do whatever he asked in payment. Through her, Democedes provoked Darius to plan a war against Greece, and when Darius sent spies to the west with Democedes as a guide, the physician escaped.

THE BABYLONIAN REVOLT: Darius could not make war on Greece immediately, for the city of Babylon revolted against his rule. Babylon was well fortified to resist a siege because of its strong walls. The inhabitants also had stored many provi-

sions, and in order to make them last longer, they chose one woman from each family to serve as a cook and strangled the others. Babylon was thus able to resist Darius for twenty months before it was finally taken by the trickery of a Persian, Zopyrus, who showed to what lengths the Persians would go in the service of their king.

Without the knowledge of his king, Zopyrus (who had received an omen that Babylon would be taken) cut off his ears and nose, shaved his hair, and scourged himself. Then he went to Darius with a plan: he would pretend to desert to the Babylonians—who, seeing him thus mutilated, could not suspect him—and would ask them for a command. A schedule as to when Darius was to send his worst soldiers against the city was agreed upon; these would be slaughtered by Zopyrus in order that he might gain the people's confidence and become entrusted with the task of guarding the walls of the city. After seven thousand Persian troops had been massacred by Zopyrus, the Babylonians gave him command of the walls, and he opened the gates to the Persian army. Babylon was taken and its walls pulled down.

COMMENT: The third Book provides necessary information on the expansion, extent, administration, and internal condition of the Persian Empire. It also tells about the accession of Darius, the king who later attempted to expand the Empire even further into Asia and who finally tried to penetrate Europe.

Herodotus shows Cambyses, son of Cyrus, as a brutal and proud man who finally was punished for his pride and disregard for other peoples' customs. Indeed, Herodotus takes this—the mocking of the gods of Egypt—as the most convincing sign that Cambyses was insane. In order to emphasize this point Herodotus repeated the story of Darius which was designed to demonstrate the "rule of law." It was thus no coincidence that Cambyses died of a wound in the thigh, for it was there that he had struck the Egyptian calf-god, Apis.

Before the accession of Darius, Herodotus reports that the most prominent Persians debated on forms of government. The speeches which he put into their mouths should not be taken for what the speakers actually said, but what

Herodotus thought they should have said as representatives of their points of view. This device was not peculiar to Herodotus, but is common throughout Greek literature.

The description of the reorganized Empire and the tribute which Darius set for each province after his accession is remarkably complete and probably existed in the form of a list, most likely at Sardis. For his information about Persian affairs, Herodotus probably made use of deserters who had come to seek asylum in Athens. The author mentioned one of them by name at the end of the third Book.

As is true throughout the *Histories*, there is an emphasis on fate and on divine warnings. Cambyses, for instance, had a dream that Smerdis was sitting on his throne. Immediately concluding that Smerdis had to be his brother of that name, Cambyses tried to cheat fate and had him killed. Yet it was about another Smerdis that the dream warned. There are countless other instances of this type of thing throughout the work: Polycrates' daughter dreamed that her father would be killed, but he refused to listen; an omen was seen, and Zopyrus knew Babylon would be taken; and so on.

The organization of Book III can be exasperating to the modern reader. The history of Samos, to take just one example, is scattered in three sections throughout the Book.

The third Book makes it clear, however, that the affairs of the Empire were finally in order: the administrative and financial system had been reorganized, and the Babylonian revolt had been put down. Darius was ready to expand his empire.

BOOK IV

MELPOMENE (MUSE OF TRAGEDY)

Darius decided to attack the Scythians (who inhabited what is now part of Rumania and Southwestern Russia) before he

invaded Greece. He did this in an attempt to secure his flank for the time when a war with the Greeks would begin.

Darius' ostensible reason for attacking the Scythians, however, was an historical one: some years before, they had invaded, defeated, and then ruled over the Median Empire, the immediate predecessor of the Persian Empire, for a period of twenty-eight years. Thus it was with revenge in their hearts that the Persians undertook the Scythian campaign.

ORIGIN OF THE SCYTHIANS: Three accounts were commonly given to explain the origins of the fierce people against whom the Great King was marching. They themselves thought that they were descended from Targitaus, son of Zeus and a daughter of the river Borysthenes (Dnieper). Targitaus was supposed to have been the first to inhabit the land where the various Scythian tribes dwelled. Three sons, Lipoxais, Arpoxais, and Colaxais, were born to him, and they ruled the land together. One day a ploughshare, a yoke, a sword, and a cup, all made of gold, fell from the sky. Lipoxais and Arpoxais came first to pick up the objects, but since they began to burn neither brother could touch them. When the youngest brother, Colaxais, went near them, however, the objects did not burn, and he carried them home. The older brothers took this as an omen and allowed Colaxais to rule the land by himself. Of the various Scythian tribes, the Auchatae were supposed to have descended from Lipoxais, the Catiari and Traspies from Arpoxais, and the Paralatae, the tribe of the kings, from Colaxais.

The Greeks did not accept this legend, and told one of their own about the origin of the Scythians. According to them, the Greek hero Heracles had some mares stolen in Scythia. During his search for them, he came upon a creature that was half woman and half serpent who told him that she had stolen the mares and had no intention of returning them until he had slept with her. Heracles consented, and she had three sons by the hero. Upon his leaving, she asked what should be done with the children. Heracles left one of his bows and said that whichever son could bend the weapon should be allowed to stay in the land (which was then uninhabited), but those who could not do so should be sent away. The name of the boy who managed to perform the feat prescribed by Heracles was Scythes, and from him, according to the Greeks, the Scythians were de-

scended. Since there were Greek colonies in the region, what this myth probably meant to say was that the Scythians were a mixed race.

Herodotus accepted the more conventional third version. The Scythians, according to this view, were once Asiatic nomads who found themselves menaced by the Massagetae, the same people who killed Cyrus. Fleeing from these, they came to the land which was then inhabited by a tribe known as the Cimmerians. When the Cimmerians heard about the approach of a powerful enemy, they were divided as to how the situation should be met: should they fight or flee? Unable to reach a decision, the two opposing factions fought a battle among themselves, and those who wanted to flee won the day. After burying their dead, the Cimmerians migrated. The Scythians consequently found the land abandoned.

Not content to let the Cimmerians go in peace, the Scythians began to pursue them. It was during this pursuit that the Scythians, losing track of their prey, invaded and defeated the Medes. They ruled over Median territory for twenty-eight years, after which time they returned to their newly-won homeland.

CUSTOMS AND RELIGION: The majority of these people were nomadic. The flat land they inhabited was well suited for grazing and had eight great rivers and abundant grass. In addition to the nomadic Scythians, there were those who devoted themselves to agriculture and raised grains. The primary purpose of this last activity was not to use the crop for food but for export sale.

The Scythians were polytheistic, but did not worship as great a number of gods as most other people did. Hestia (goddess of the hearth), Zeus, Apollo, Aphrodite, Heracles, and Ares (god of war), were adored by all the Scythians, while one tribe also made sacrifices to Poseidon, god of the sea. None of the tribes made images or built altars to any deity except Ares.

Sacrifices were offered to the gods by strangling the victim and using its own bones as fuel (for wood was scarce) and its own stomach as a vessel in which to boil the meat. Human sacrifices were made only to Ares, one in a hundred men being chosen

from the prisoners of war. The ceremony began with the pouring of a libation over the victim's head. The prisoner's throat was then cut, and the blood was caught in a bowl and poured over a number of iron scimitars which represented the god of war. The arms of the corpse then were cut off and thrown in the air, presumably to make the ghost harmless.

Their customs in war were no less brutal. In order to share in the spoils of war, a Scythian had to bring back the head of a slain enemy. After that, the scalp was taken and worked with the fingers until it became supple. It was then hung on the bridle of a horse, and those who showed the most scalps on their bridle were considered the most valiant soldiers. The skulls of their worst enemies—foreign and domestic—were frequently made into drinking cups.

Divination, like war, also fulfilled an important function in Scythian society. Scythian diviners found out the truth by means of numerous small sticks or wands made from willow trees, and if a dispute arose among these men, a vote was taken to determine the majority opinion. If the king was sick, for example, diviners were called in. They usually declared that the illness was caused by a certain man who had sworn the king a false oath. The man would then be summoned, and he would deny the charge. More diviners would then be summoned to substantiate the charge against the accused. If they did not, more diviners were summoned, and if a conclusion was not reached, still more. If a majority finally went against the accused party, he was beheaded. If not, the original diviners were put to death by being tied in an oxen-drawn cart which was set afire.

The Scythians also had interesting customs relating to the burial of their kings. Upon the death of a king, the stomach was opened and filled with spices; the corpse was then carried through his domains in a wagon, so that it might be seen by all Scythians before burial. The monarch was then buried in a barrow along with one of his concubines, his cook, cupbearer, groom, squire, and messenger, all of whom were strangled. Offerings of cups and food were also buried with the body. A great mound of earth was then heaped upon the grave. Before a year was out, fifty of the finest horses and fifty of the king's servants were also strangled. The dead horses were set upon

stakes so as to surround the grave, and each of the servants was mounted on a horse and made to remain upright by means of a stake driven through his body. A circle of corpses was thus made to guard the mound before the burial was considered complete.

The exact number of Scythians remained unknown in Herodotus' time, but there had been an attempt to discover how numerous these people were. One of their kings, Ariantas, ordered every one of his subjects to bring him an arrowhead. When this order had been carried out, a large basin said to have been about five inches thick and to have had a capacity of 5,400 gallons was made from them.

THE INVASION: It was against these people that Darius marched with a large army (the figure of 700,000 which Herodotus quotes, however, is considered to be an exaggeration). In order to establish contact with the Scythians, Darius decided to cross the Bosporus on a bridge of boats. This was designed and built for him by a Greek from Samos whose name was Mandrocles. Darius was well pleased with the bridge and gave Mandrocles a large reward for his labor.

The Great King and his army crossed the strait into Europe and conquered the first people who offered resistance, the Getae. Darius then crossed the Ister (Danube) and ordered the Ionians who were serving in his army to destroy the bridge which they had built. He was persuaded to revoke this order, however, by Coes, commander of the soldiers from Mytilene. The Ionians were ordered to stay behind for sixty days to guard the structure: if Darius and the army did not return by that time, it meant all was well; they could destroy the bridge and go home. Up to that time, they were to keep a sharp lookout in case the army was forced to retreat.

The Scythians, meanwhile, were alarmed at the Persian approach, and began to search for allies among their neighbors: the Tauri, the Agathyrsi, the Neuri, the Androphagi, the Melanchlaini, the Geloni, the Budini, and the Sauromatae. Herodotus tells something about all these nations.

The Tauri sacrificed shipwrecked sailors and Greeks taken in raids by clubbing the victim to death and cutting his head off.

The head was mounted on a pole while the body was thrown over a cliff or buried (there was some dispute about this last point). The Agathyrsi were the most opulent of these peoples, much taken to wearing gold. The Neuri, who were once driven out of their land by snakes, were said to turn into wolves for a few days a year, but Herodotus did not believe this—he was just repeating the story. The wearing of a black cloak was the outstanding characteristic of the Melanchlaini, while the Androphagi were notable because they were cannibals. There was much Greek influence among the Budini, another neighboring people. They were primitives, but they were exposed to Greek culture because the inhabitants of Gelonus had built their city on Budini territory. The Geloni were descended from Greek deserters. The religion of this agricultural people resembled that of the Greeks, and their language was a mixture of Greek and Scythian. The Sauromatae were also a mixed people, said to have been descended from Scythians and Amazons, the mythical women who fought like men.

The Scythians went to all these nations and tried to show them that Darius meant to subdue all the peoples in the area. They pointed to the Persian conquest of the Getae as proof of their allegations. Only the Budini, the Geloni, and the Sauromatae agreed to aid the Scythians. The others refused because (they said) they felt the Scythians had provoked the war by their long-past invasion of the Median Empire. For this reason they would not support the Scythians, but declared that they would defend themselves if invaded by the Persians.

Realizing that without allies they were no match for Darius in a pitched battle, the Scythians decided upon a "scorched earth" policy. They would refuse to come to battle with the enemy and, driving cattle in front of them, would destroy wells and grasslands. The Persians would thus be hard-pressed for provisions, for there were no farmlands or cities to take in Scythia. This massive retreat was not the only aspect of the Scythian campaign: they would constantly harass the Persian army.

The Scythians followed this plan with tenacity until it was crowned by success. Keeping one day's march ahead of the invading army, they led Darius all through Scythia and into the lands of the neighbors who had refused their help. These neutrals were then plundered by both the Scythians and the Per-

sians. After the chase had lasted for some time, Darius grew weary and sent a message to the Scythian king, Idanthyrsus, telling him either to fight or to surrender. The king replied that he would do neither, but he would intensify his harassment. Darius' provisions began to dwindle because of the Scythian tactics, and discontent within the army grew (the Scythians, eager to prevent a Persian retreat until it would be too late, had even donated some cows to the Persians).

THE WITHDRAWAL: One day, while the Persian situation was becoming more desperate, a messenger arrived from the Scythians bearing some gifts for Darius: a bird, a frog, a mouse, and five arrows. The messenger did not explain their meaning, but left that task to the Persians. Darius interpreted the gifts as a sign that the Scythians surrendered because, he said, a mouse lives in the earth and a frog in the water (the rendering of "earth and water" to a conqueror in ancient times meant to acknowledge him as a master), a bird resembled a horse, and the arrows meant that the Scythians were giving up their weapons. One of Darius' advisers was not of this opinion, however, for he said the gifts meant that if the Persians did not turn into birds so that they could fly, or into mice so that they could burrow into the earth, or into frogs so that they could live in the water, they would die from the arrows. When the Scythians continued their tactics, Darius saw that his adviser had been correct about the gifts, and made ready to retreat. This same adviser, Gobryas, counseled the king to leave his weakest soldiers behind and make for the bridge on the Ister. Darius agreed, and, leaving his fires lit and his beasts of burden tethered in order to deceive the Scythians, he abandoned the worst part of his army and fled by night.

When the Scythians discovered that the Great King had withdrawn, they speedily rode to the Ionians who were guarding the bridge and tried to convince them to abandon their post. The sixty days which Darius had commanded them to remain guard, the Ionians were told, had passed. It would therefore not be shameful to leave; on the contrary, it would be in obedience to explicit orders. Besides that, the Scythians said they would trap and destroy Darius, so the Ionians would be rid of a master. The Greeks decided to deliberate.

Miltiades of Athens, the commander of a Greek contingent

from cities around the Hellespont (Dardanelles), agreed with the Scythians that the bridge should be destroyed and the cities of Ionia freed. Disagreeing with this point of view, however, was Histiaeus, tyrant of Miletus. The argument he used to keep the Greeks where they were was that they all held cities by the grace of Darius. If Darius were killed, the Ionian cities would surely overthrow all of them and set up democracies, for it was that form of government, and not tyranny, that was preferred.

Having been convinced to maintain the bridge intact until the arrival of Darius, the Greek tyrants told the Scythians that their advice had been accepted. As the Ionians pretended to destroy the structure, the Scythians rushed off in search of Darius' retreating army.

They failed to find it, although it was only after much wandering that the Persians finally found their way back to the bridge. Darius had been saved by the Greeks. The Persian king soon crossed over into Asia, but he left his lieutenant Megabazus with eighty thousand men in Thrace to conquer those Greeks in the area who had not yet submitted to the Persian power.

LIBYA: Besides this Persian push towards the north, the Empire expanded westward along the North African coast. The region was peopled not only by natives, but by Greeks. They had colonized the area and had many interests there. Striking at Libya, therefore, was a means of outflanking the Greek world in the south as attacking the Scythians meant outflanking it in the north.

The most important Greek cities in Libya were Cyrene and Barca (both were located in Cyrenaica, in modern Libya). Cyrene was established by colonists from the Greek island of Thera who had been ordered to found the city by the oracle of Apollo at Delphi. The city population of Thera had a difficult time persuading the colonists to go to Libya, but when hard economic conditions beset the island, they were forced to leave. (Despite the supernatural explanations, difficult economic conditions usually prompted the founding of colonies in distant lands.)

Cyrene was founded first, Barca being founded by the brothers

of Arcesilaus, a descendant of the original king of Cyrene, when he exiled them. As time went on, the monarchs of Cyrene lost much of their power until there was an attempt by Arcesilaus (not the one mentioned above) to recover it. A war broke out between the factions, and Arcesilaus fled the country. While in exile, the king collected a force and prepared a return to his city against the advice of the Delphian oracle, who said that Cyrene had been given to the royal family for only eight generations. Arcesilaus mánaged to regain control of Cyrene, executing and banishing many of his enemies after he had done so. He later married the daughter of the king of Barca, and it was in that city that he was assassinated by exiles from his own city.

This same king who was killed had also surrendered Cyrene to the Persians without a fight, and his mother, Pheretima, appealed to the Persian satrap in Egypt, Aryandes, to help her avenge her son. Aryandes sent a herald to Barca to ask who was responsible for the crime; the whole population stood behind the murderers, and the Persian army marched against the city. (Herodotus, however, believed that the viceroy used this incident merely as an excuse to invade.)

The Persians were unable to take the city by force, but finally succeeded in doing so by guile. Those who were supposed guilty of the murder were ordered crucified on the walls of the city by Pheretima, and the remainder of the population was resettled in a remote part of the Empire (in Bactria, near India) by the Persians. Pheretima did not escape punishment for her excessive revenge, for she died before reaching Egypt.

Herodotus did not write only about the Greeks of Libya, but also about the native populations. (Libya was also used by the Greeks to mean the whole African continent.) In telling about their customs and the places where they lived, it is likely that Herodotus relied upon information from Phoenician sources. The author did not travel in those regions, and it was Phoenician rather than Greek traders who penetrated deep into Africa and came into contact with the nomadic populations.

COMMENT: The fourth Book tells of attempted Persian expansion after the consolidation achieved during the early years of Darius' reign. It deals primarily with Persian

campaigns against Thrace and Scythia in the north and along the North African coast in the south.

The war against Scythia was by far the more important; this can be seen in the number of troops (albeit exaggerated) involved, and by the fact that it was led personally by Darius. Although the Great King did not fulfill his design to subdue the Scythians, the move was not a total failure. The Scythians refused to meet him in open battle, but Darius had demonstrated to them the power possessed by Persia. Scythia was not conquered, but the objective had been achieved nonetheless: his flank was secure. The Scythians would not dare to launch a major offensive against Persia when it became involved in war against Greece. In addition to this, Darius had left his lieutenant in Thrace to conquer those Greeks who lived around the Hellespont. Persian power in that area of the world had become firmly established, but the expansive force was sure to bring more pressure to bear westward—towards Greece.

Expansion into Libya was more limited in scope than was the Scythian operation. It was true that a move into the region was probably undertaken to outflank Greece (Libya was directly south of Greece) and to explore Greek interests in the area, but the Persian Empire had inherited the Libyan problem from Egypt, which had also attempted to expand into Libya. An Egyptian defeat at the hands of troops from Cyrene, for example, had served as an occasion for the revolt of Amasis against his king, Apries. When the Persians took over Egypt, Libya as far as Cyrene and Barca naturally fell into their sphere of influence. It was in this fertile region that Persian power reached its natural limits in North Africa: beyond it was the desert.

The fourth book, then, is divided into two large segments dealing with Scythia and Libya. These are counterparts to each other in the story—one north, one south; one cold, one hot; one well-watered, one dry. The people of both areas could boast mythical origins, and the origins of both are examined. The Scythian story, however, being more important than the Libyan, is longer and more tightly con-

structed. Both adventures were preludes to the unfolding of greater designs.

With two movements to the north and to the west (along the North African coast), the Persians had practically surrounded Greece. After the consolidation of Thrace to the north of Greece (described in the next Book), Darius was in a position to descend upon Greece southwards from that area or to sail westwards from Asia Minor.

BOOK V

TERPSICHORE (MUSE OF DANCING)

Megabazus the Persian was ordered to conquer Thrace, and he accomplished his mission with dispatch. The greatest independent power in the area, Perinthus, was taken after stubborn resistance, overwhelmed by numbers. One by one, all the cities in the region fell to the might of Persia.

THE THRACIANS: The Thracians were weak not because they were few, but because they could not unite. The people who inhabited Thrace were numerous, and Herodotus was of the opinion that they would have been invincible, had they been able to act in concert with each other.

The customs and religion of the people of Thrace were similar. The Getae, already conquered by Darius while his Scythian campaign was in progress, believed in the immortality of the soul. Salmoxis was their god, and they sent him messages in the most logical way corresponding to their belief—killing the messenger. The Trausi had several distinctive customs: when a baby was born into the world, they wept for the troubles it would encounter in life; when a man died, they laughed and joked, for he had left the world's ills behind. A man could have many wives among this people, but only the worthiest one could be killed over his tomb after he died. This right (which also carried with it the privilege of being buried with the husband) was hotly contested, and the surviving wives lived in disgrace.

Most of the Thracians considered it honorable to live by plundering others, and to work on the land was looked down upon. Many children from Thrace were also sold abroad. The only gods which these people recognized were Ares, Dionysus, and Artemis (goddess of the chase), while the kings claimed Hermes as an ancestor. These then were the people Megabazus conquered for his master, Darius.

THE RETURN OF DARIUS: Sardis, capital of the province of Lydia, was the immediate destination of the Great King after he had crossed into Asia. His first task was to reward the Greeks who had served him so well on the Scythian expedition. He called in Histiaeus and Coes, the ones who had saved the bridge over the Ister, and told them to ask whatever they desired of him. Histiaeus, the tyrant of Miletus, asked permission to found a city in Thrace, while Coes requested to be made tyrant of Mytilene. Both wishes were granted.

While Darius was in Sardis he also sent specific orders to Megabazus to conquer Paeonia (a region west of Thrace), and to transport the captives into Asia. The general marched into the area, but he was not able to subdue all the Paeonians, especially the ones who were lake dwellers. (Traces of lake-dwellings have been found in the area.)

Megabazus' next move was against Macedonia, a region (west of Paeonia) inhabited by a people related to the Greeks. Envoys were sent by the Persians to demand "earth and water" from the king, Amyntas. Amyntas consented because he feared the consequences of a refusal. The Persians then became drunk and began to take liberties with Macedonian women. Unable to restrain himself, Amyntas' son, Alexander, contrived to have all the envoys murdered. When the Persians investigated, Alexander handled the situation by bribing the man in charge of the search party.

The feats of Megabazus were substantial, despite the unsettled Macedonian situation, and the general marched south to report to Darius. On his way, he had a chance to learn about the new city that Histiaeus was building. Thoroughly alarmed, he awakened the king's fears to the possibility of revolt. The former tyrant of Miletus, he said, was being given a chance to con-

struct a well-fortified city in a strategic location and in a region in which Greeks, silver mines, and wood abounded. With all these resources at his disposal, the new city was bound to grow rich, become a great naval power, and challenge Persia. The only remedy was to stop Histiaeus at once, and this the king consented to do by calling on the Greek to come to the capital city of Susa for the purpose of serving as an adviser to him.

EXPANSION WESTWARD: Persia was not content with the newly-won territory of Thrace and began to push its frontiers westward to the islands further out in the Aegean Sea. Otanes, successor to Megabazus, procured ships from Lesbos (this Greek island was a Persian possession) and sailed to conquer the islands of Lemnos and Imbros. They were taken.

Soon after these successes, a chance to score greater gains presented itself to the Persians. Exiles from the rich island of Naxos, the most important of a group known as the Cyclades, came to Miletus asking for aid to return to their homeland. Aristagoras, son-in-law and successor of Histiaeus, told them that he was unable to muster the force needed to conquer the island: he would ask the Persians. The tyrant then went to see Artaphernes, the satrap of Sardis and brother of Darius. Aristagoras put the proposition to him in such a way that refusal was impossible. First Naxos would be taken, then the rest of the Cyclades group, then Euboea (a large island just off peninsular Greece), and then, by implication, all Greece. He even offered to pay the expenses of the campaign. Artaphernes accepted and, when Darius' approval was received, the war began.

The campaign did not go well, however. Aristagoras was the supreme commander, but a conflict of authority between him and the commander of the Persian force, Megabates, soon developed. After suffering a humiliation at the Greek's hands, Megabates sought revenge by warning Naxos of the surprise attack which would open hostilities. The people thus were well prepared for the onslaught: the attacking force was unable to subdue the island.

THE IONIAN REVOLT: Aristagoras was discomfited by the time of his return to the mainland. He had failed to fulfill his promises to the Persians, and the expedition had cost more than he had anticipated. There was only one step which would prevent his removal and punishment: rebellion.

Aristagoras soon received word from Histiaeus that he was also in favor of a revolt (he was tired of Susa, and he felt Darius would have him sent back to his homeland if trouble broke out). All those who favored the move met with Aristagoras to plan the action they would take. In order to obtain the support of the people of the Greek cities, it was decided that the Greek tyrants, who were still with the expedition which had gone to Naxos, were to be captured and handed over to them. After this had been done, the cities were told to prepare for war while Aristagoras sailed to Greece to ask for aid.

SPARTA: Aristagoras made directly for the most powerful Greek state, Sparta. Cleomenes, an unstable character who showed signs of madness, was king at the time. A bronze tablet on which was engraved a map of the area was shown to Cleomenes while Aristagoras explained how easy it would be to subdue the rich Persian Empire, and how the Persians did not really know how to fight. Cleomenes asked for two days' time to render his decision. When the appointed day arrived, the Spartan king had another question for his guest: he asked how far the capital of Persia, Susa, was from the sea. Aristagoras answered that it was a three months' distance. Immediately Cleomenes ordered Aristagoras to leave the city. Sparta, the conservative power in Greece, would not go so far for any victory. Aristagoras attempted to bribe the king, but to no avail. He left for Athens.

ATHENS: The city of Athens had been freed from the tyranny of Pisistratus and his sons by the time Aristagoras came to ask for help. Pisistratus himself had died a natural death and had been succeeded by his two sons, Hippias and Hipparchus. Assassination was the fate of Hipparchus, even though he had been forewarned of the event in a dream. (He was killed at a festival by members of the Gephyraean clan. The killers were descendants of Phoenician settlers, the people who, according to Herodotus, had originally given the Greeks the letters of their alphabet. These letters of course changed and developed over a long span of time.) Hippias ruled the city alone after his brother's death. Although his relations with Sparta were warm. it was that city which ended his power in Athens. The Spartans were tricked into performing this service by members of the exiled Athenian clan of Alcmaeon. These people went to Delphi and succeeded in bribing the priestess at the oracle to order the Spartans to "free Athens," no matter what question they

asked of her. The ruse worked, and after two Spartan campaigns against Hippias, he was exiled to Sigeum, a city in Asia Minor.

Athenian affairs, however, were not settled after the expulsion of Hippias. A dispute immediately arose between the city's democratic and oligarchic factions. Cleisthenes, leader of the democrats, pushed through reforms and gained the people's support. Isagoras, leader of the opposing faction, was driven to seek support from Cleomenes, king of Sparta.

Sparta could not bear to have a powerful democratic state within its orbit, and, as the greatest power in Greece, was in a position to do something about it. Cleomenes interfered with the internal affairs of Athens by ordering Cleisthenes to leave the city. Cleisthenes did so, after which a Spartan force marched into Athens and banished seventy leading families. The Athenians, resentful of this treatment, rose up, expelled the Spartans, and recalled the exiles. In addition to this, the city sent to Persia to ask for an alliance, but it refused the "earth and water" demanded by the Persians.

Sparta did not give up the battle so easily. It called together all the cities of the region it dominated (Peloponnese), gathered a great army, and marched north towards Athens. At the same time, two more armies were marching south against the Athenians—one from Boeotia (a region to the north of Athens) and one from Chalcis (a city on the island of Euboea). None of these forces succeeded against the fledgling democracy. Sparta's allies decided among themselves that what they were doing was wrong (Sparta had two kings, and even these disagreed among themselves), and the army dissolved before it ever met the Athenians. The Athenian troops then moved north and destroyed both the Boeotians and the Chalcidians.

The city seemed invincible, but its enemies had not abandoned their designs. Thebes, the most important city in Boeotia, was prompted by an oracle to ask the city of Aegina (on the island of the same name) for aid against Athens. Aegina, an ancient foe of Athens, readily consented and ravaged the Athenian coast. While an expedition of revenge against Aegina was being prepared in Athens, word came that Sparta was about to make an attempt to restore Hippias to power.

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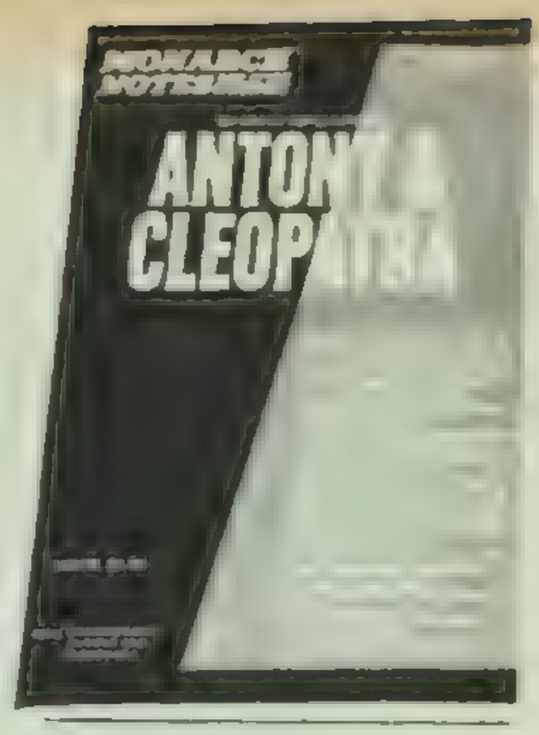

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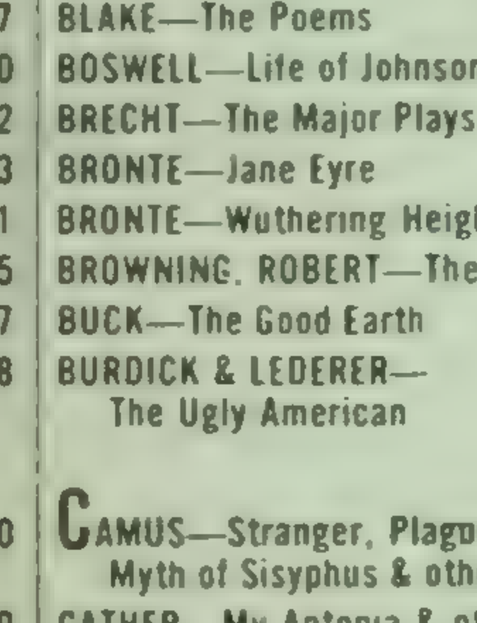

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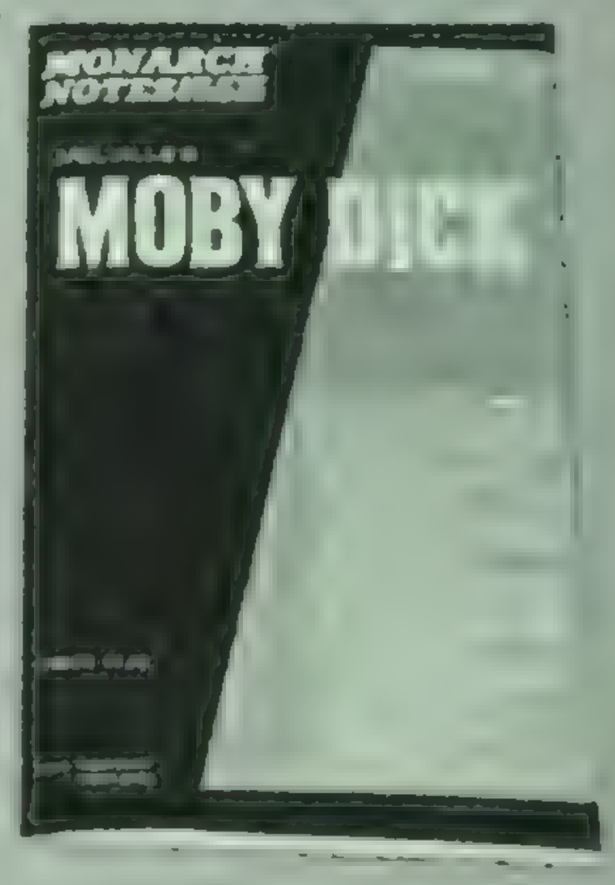

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The Spartans had repented their haste in expelling the tyrant because they discovered that the oracle which had ordered them to do it had been bribed. They accordingly brought Hippias from Asia Minor and informed their allies that the mistake was about to be rectified. The allies, however, refused to follow Sparta in the projected attack.

The delegate from the city of Corinth made a long speech saying that Sparta's action in ending equality in a neighboring city would be unjust. He then recounted the ills which the Corinthian people had suffered under the rule of their most famous tyrant, Periander. Sparta, thus overruled by its allies. was foiled in its plan to reinstate Hippias by force.

Hippias had not yet given up hope of returning to Athens, and so he sought another powerful ally—Persia. Going to Sardis, he and his followers plotted with the satrap, Artaphernes. Hearing about this, the Athenians sent envoys to the satrap requesting that he disregard the exiles, but he answered by ordering them to restore Hippias. There was open hostility between the two powers when the Athenians refused the demand.

It was during this high-point of bad feeling between Athens and Persia that Aristagoras arrived in the city to ask it to aid the Ionians. The Athenians were persuaded to send twenty warships to Ionia. The city of Eretria (on the island of Euboea), which was friendly to Miletus, also sent five ships to aid the rebels. (The numbers are misleading, for it appears that Eretria was the dominant sea-power at the time.) Greece and Persia were about to come into direct conflict for the first time.

THE RAID ON SARDIS: Emboldened by his success in securing Greek aid, Aristagoras planned a commando-type raid on the provincial capital of Sardis. With Athenian and Eretrian help, the rebels managed to take and fire the town, but they were unable to destroy the citadel. The Ionians withdrew when reinforcements were brought up against them. Persian troops, however, managed to catch up and drive the Greeks back to their ships, killing the Eretrian commander and inflicting heavy losses. It was after this incident that Darius swore he would have revenge upon the Athenians; he even ordered his servant to say "remember the Athenians" when he served the Great King's dinner.

THE REVOLT SPREADS: Athens withdrew its aid after the raid on Sardis, but the incident had widespread repercussions. The raid prolonged the revolt against Persia, for there now seemed to be a possibility of success. Despite the withdrawal of Athens, the Ionians sailed north and liberated the Greek cities around the Hellespont. The non-Greek peoples of Caria and Caunia (Southwest Asia Minor) threw in their lot with the rebels. Cyprus was also in revolt.

The island of Cyprus was reconquered by the Persians after hard fighting, but on the whole their progress was not spectacular. A Persian army, for example, was destroyed in an ambush by the Carians after scoring a number of successes. Nevertheless, the overwhelming might of Persia began to tell as it reconquered the cities around the Hellespont.

Aristagoras soon saw that the chances of success for the revolt were slim and advised his friends to select a place of refuge. He himself attempted to make his way to Myrcinus, the city which had been founded by Histiaeus, but he and his army were slaughtered while besieging a city in Thrace.

COMMENT: Thus the fifth Book ends—with affairs going badly for the Ionians. Herodotus had done much for the story of the Persian wars in this relatively short section of the work. The characteristics of the main protagonists and the immediate causes of war between Greece and Persia are all examined.

Persia, first of all, is shown expanding to the west. After Thrace had been conquered, Darius sanctioned conquests in the Aegean, and Lemnos and Imbros were absorbed into the Empire. Then an opportunity to take Naxos and the Cyclades group presented itself. It was clear that the Persians had no intention of halting there, for the Cyclades were a means to get at Euboea, and Euboea would have meant a foothold in Greece itself. The Naxos expedition came off badly because of rivalry between commanders, but that did not alter the intentions.

The Ionian revolt which began after the attempt to take Naxos can be called the immediate occasion of the wars between Greece and Persia which were to follow.

Although it was clear that the antagonists were bound to come into conflict sooner or later, the raid on Sardis was in fact an unprovoked Greek attack on a Persian province. Herodotus portrays this rebellion as having had its origins in personal matters, but it is obvious that Aristagoras had to have the support of all the Asiatic Greeks in order for the move to have a chance of success. The people of the coastal cities had grievances against the Persians: notably they objected to being ruled by tyrants, albeit native, subject to foreign control. Aristagoras showed himself aware of this point when he turned the captured tyrants over to their native cities.

When Aristagoras landed in Greece to enlist help for his crusade, he naturally went to Sparta first, for that city was the greatest power in the area. It is through this visit that Herodotus portrays the Spartan character: conservative, withdrawn, suspicious. Cleomenes had almost been convinced to help the Ionians—the riches of the Persian Empire had been appealing—but when he found out that Susa was a three months' journey from the sea, he refused to listen to any more arguments: it was too far to go. (Herodotus, with tongue in cheek, elaborately describes the route, including the famous royal road, and concludes that the trip really required three months and three days.)

After his rebuff at Sparta, Aristagoras went to Athens. That city-state had recently thrown off the yoke of its tyrant, and, in a burst of enthusiasm, had managed to overcome a triple threat to its independence from Boeotia, Chalcis, and Sparta. The continuing Spartan challenge was an especially serious one, for that city took it upon itself to destroy unfavorable governments and set up favorite oligarchies in its sphere whenever it could. Athens had already been one of the foremost Greek powers under the Pisistratids, but after they had been expelled, its strength grew immeasurably. Herodotus thought that this increased power could be attributed to the eagerness with which the Athenians greeted democracy.

It was in Athens that Aristagoras was granted the help refused by Sparta. This too, according to Herodotus, was an aspect of Athenian democracy, for Aristagoras suc-

ceeded in tricking thirty thousand Athenians where he had been unable to fool one Spartan. This explanation, however, is far-fetched. Athens, the unsatisfied, expanding (perhaps even idealistic) power was willing to take a chance where Sparta was not—that is, until it discovered that the Persians were not so easily defeated. Yet by its help at the raid on Sardis (which was more of a prestige victory than anything else), Athens, together with Eretria, infused new life into the Ionian revolt and prolonged it for about six years. Although Athens soon withdrew from the action, it made an implacable enemy of Darius, King of Persia: European Greeks and Persians had finally collided.

BOOK VI

ERATO (MUSE OF LOVE POETRY)

Although the Ionian revolt continued for a number of years after the burning of Sardis, its days were clearly numbered. The Persians made slow headway against the rebels, but the progress was steady. Unable to obtain any substantial Spartan or Athenian aid, the Greek cities of Asia Minor were fighting a doomed battle, for they could not hope to match the resources which were at the disposal of the Persian Empire.

THE FORTUNES OF HISTIAEUS: Histiaeus, the former tyrant of Miletus, was correct in his opinion that Darius would let him go to Ionia if trouble erupted there. While making the journey to his homeland, he was accused by Artaphernes, governor of Lydia, of instigating the rebellion. Fearing the satrap because he had guessed the truth, Histiaeus fled Sardis, went to the Ionians, and told them that Darius planned to transport Phoenician settlers to Ionia. After telling this lie, he sent letters to certain prominent Persians with whom he had discussed the possibility of a revolt against Darius. These letters were intercepted and his correspondents put to death.

After the frustration of his plans, Histiaeus went to Miletus, where a hostile reception awaited him. The people, very recently rid of Aristagoras, were unwilling to accept him. Histiaeus attempted to force his way into the city, but was

wounded and driven back. Histiaeus then went to Lesbos and convinced the people of that island to help him take Byzantium (Istanbul). He captured Ionian ships sailing out of the Black Sea by using the city as a base of operations. This activity was continued until news that Miletus had fallen to the Persians reached him. Histiaeus then sailed from Byzantium and attacked the islands of Chios and Thasos. Although Chios fell, he could not take Thasos because he was forced to see to the defense of Lesbos. The former tyrant was taken by the Persians while on his way to Lesbos, sent to Sardis, and executed by Artaphernes. His embalmed head was then sent to Darius, who, however, was displeased at the satrap's action. The head was buried with honors, for the monarch felt that Histiaeus had benefited Persia, despite his part in the revolt.

THE BATTLE OF LADE: While Histiaeus was pursuing a policy of piracy in the north, his native city was fighting for its very existence. The Persians were bringing pressure to bear on Miletus when an Ionian fleet assembled at Lade, an island off the Milesian coast. There a leader named Dionysius of Phocaea was appointed to train the sailors. For seven days the men submitted to intense training in the hot sun, but then they refused to follow any more orders. Discipline was essential if the Greeks were to gain the victory, for they had only about half the enemy's six hundred ships. When the Samians saw the breakdown of discipline, they decided to accept a desertion-for-mercy proposition made by the Persians. (The former Ionian tyrants who had taken refuge with the Persians had been authorized to make this offer to all their former subjects.) When the battle began, all but eleven of the Samian ships broke for home. They were followed by most of the Ionian ships. The battle was lost practically before it began because of these desertions.

THE FALL OF MILETUS: It was now a question of time until Miletus would be taken, for after the Battle of Lade it was besieged both by land and by water. The city was soon sacked by the Persians, and the survivors were sent as slaves to Darius. The king, however, had compassion and settled the Milesians at Ampe, a city close to where the Tigris flows into the Arabian Gulf.

The destruction of Miletus shocked the Greek world, especially

the Athenians. When a play on the subject was produced in Athens, the Athenians wept, fined the playwright, and forbade the work to be re-enacted.

END OF THE REVOLT: The Persians showed themselves true statesmen after they had defeated the Ionian attempt for liberation. Araphernes forced the different cities to live at peace with each other (apparently they had not before, even under Persian suzerainty), and, after having measured the territories of the various cities, he set the tribute of each according to the amount of land it possessed. During the spring a large Persian army and a fleet under Mardonius, Darius' son-in-law, reached Ionia. Mardonius removed the grievance which had been one of the major factors in the revolt: the Ionian tyrants were deposed and each of the cities was allowed to set up a democratic form of government (while remaining, of course, in the Persian orbit).

MOUNT ATHOS: Mardonius marched north after he had reformed the governments of the Ionian cities. His aim was to cross into Europe at the Hellespont, subdue as many Greek towns as possible, and to march south against Athens and Eretria, the cities which had participated in the raid on Sardis. Mardonius succeeded in taking Thasos, an island in the Thracian Sea, and in bringing the Macedonians under Persian control. He was foiled in his goal of marching south into Greece, however, for as his fleet was rounding the treacherous promontory of Mount Athos (to the northeast of Greece), a strong wind came up and dashed three hundred ships with twenty thousand men aboard against the rocks. In addition to this, the army fared badly in an encounter with a Thracian people, the Brygi. Although the Brygi were finally defeated, Mardonius had no choice but to retreat because both his army and navy were in poor condition.

GREEK AFFAIRS: Darius did not abandon his design to conquer Greece even following this setback. After the return of Mardonius, he sent heralds to the Greek cities and demanded that they give him "earth and water." Many Greek cities gave the tokens of submission which the Persians demanded, but the two major powers, Athens and Sparta, refused to do so. Those two cities, in fact, provoked increased hostility from Persia by killing the heralds, who were thrown into wells and pits and told to take the "earth and water" themselves.

Among the city-states which "medized" (that is, submitted to the Medes, as the Persians were called in Greece) was Aegina, the ancient enemy of Athens. Aegina was a major sea power at the time and the island on which it was located was close to the Athenian coast, so it was in a position to serve as a valuable base for the Persians. The Athenians went to Sparta and denounced the Aeginetans' actions, saying that they had medized in order to do harm to the Athenians and to all Greece. Cleomenes, king of Sparta, agreed, and he went to Aegina to demand that the city hand over the men who had prompted the submission to Persia. The people of the city refused to do so because, they said, Cleomenes was only one king of Sparta, and, that city having two kings, the demand of both Spartan monarchs was required before they would submit. Demaratus, the other king, was secretly encouraging Aegina to resist, for rivalry between the two royal houses of Sparta had always been intense.

The origin of the dual kingship in Sparta was said to have come about when a Spartan queen gave birth to twins. At a loss to discover which one was the elder, and therefore the heir to the throne, the Spartans sent to Delphi, and the oracle told them to allow both children to be kings. More honor, however, was to be rendered to the elder. The oracle was obeyed after the Spartans contrived a method to find out which twin was born first. An intense rivalry soon developed between the descendants of these kings, because more honor was rendered to one house than the other. (Despite this explanation, the two kings served to limit the power of the monarchy, for they were a check upon each other.)

When Cleomenes discovered that he was being thwarted by Demaratus, he contrived to have him deposed by casting doubts upon his birth (he bribed a priestess at Delphi). After this had been done, Cleomenes managed to have Leotychides, a Spartan who had helped depose Demaratus, named as king. Both kings then went to Aegina and demanded hostages because the city had given "earth and water" to King Darius. Seeing that it was useless to resist, the most influential men in the city were given to Sparta; Cleomenes sent them to Athens as prisoners.

Both Cleomenes and Leotychides came to evil ends. Leotychides was found accepting a bribe while making war in Thes-

saly (north Greece) and was banished from Sparta. When the truth of how Cleomenes had bribed a priestess at Delphi in order to depose Demaratus was learned, he was taken prisoner, but he went mad and literally hacked himself to death with a knife. Several Greek cities claimed that Cleomenes' death was a punishment for the many sacrileges he had committed in the temples and sacred precincts of cities such as Athens and Argos. The Spartans, on the other hand, thought it was the habit of drinking too much wine (learned from the Scythians) which brought him to his end. Herodotus saw his fate as a punishment for the way he had treated Demaratus.

The Spartans sought to make up for the results of Cleomenes' actions by demanding that Athens return the Aeginetan hostages. When Athens refused, Aegina kidnapped prominent Athenians during a festival. The Athenians in reprisal provoked a democratic revolution in Aegina (whose government was oligarchic) and sent seventy ships to attack the city. Both the attempted rebellion and the Athenian expedition, however, were defeated by Aegina.

THE PERSIAN ATTACK: While the Greeks were encountering these difficulties among themselves, it was clear that Darius had not accepted the Athenian and Spartan refusal to submit to him, nor had he forgotten that Athens and Eretria had helped the Ionians burn Sardis. Since the northerly route taken by Mardonius had proved unfeasible because of Mount Athos, Datis, a nephew of Darius, and Artaphernes were put in charge of a new expedition. Darius ordered his maritime dominions to build ships for him, and by the time six hundred were ready, he was set to launch the invasion: it was going to be seaborne.

The Persian fleet assembled at Samos and sailed westward. When it reached Naxos, it landed troops and took the city which the Persians had been unable to conquer before the Ionian revolt began. Continuing on its westward course, the Persian force spared the sacred island of Delos (where Apollo and Artemis were supposed to have been born), but stopped at other islands and forced men into their army by holding their children hostage.

It was plain after some time that the Persians were going to besiege Eretria before making for Athens. The Athenians attempted to help Eretria by sending four thousand soldiers

who had been placed as armed colonists on Euboea, but the Eretrians sent them back to Athens. They did this because treachery on the part of some Eretrians was expected. This, in fact, came to pass on the seventh day of the Persian siege when the city was betrayed from within.

MARATHON: After they had sacked Eretria, the Persians landed at Marathon, a site north of Athens which they thought suitable for cavalry action. Hippias, who hoped to return to Athens by the force of Persian arms, guided them to the spot. The Persians expected the Athenians to await them behind the walls of their city as the Eretrians had done, but Athenian soldiers were rushed to Marathon when word came that the enemy had landed there.

Ten generals, each representing a different tribe, commanded the Athenian force. Each of the generals was to have control for a day. In addition to these officers, there was a polemarch ("leader in war") who was decided by lot. Before opposing forces joined in battle, the generals sent a runner, Pheidippides, to secure aid from Sparta. The Spartans, however, told the messenger that they could not come because of a religious ceremony: they would help when the moon was full. Although the Spartans could not make it, help came from Plataea, a city which was under the protection of Athens. The force was small, but it was appreciated.

A difference of opinion as to whether a battle should be fought at all soon split the leaders. Five commanders thought that the Athenians were too few to confront such a large enemy force alone. The other five were for attacking immediately.

Miltiades was the leader of those who wanted to engage the Persians. He had been a tyrant in the Chersonese (the peninsula which forms the northern shore of the Hellespont), and had served with Darius in the Scythian campaign. His familiarity with Persian tactics made him a particularly fit commander to oppose them. He spoke to Callimachus, the polemarch whose vote was to break the deadlock, and convinced him to declare for a battle.

THE BATTLE: Although the other generals abdicated their right to command to Miltiades, he waited until his turn to command the army arrived. The Athenians and Plataeans were then

ordered to make their line as long as the enemy's. Both wings were made strong, and as a result of this maneuver the center of the Athenian line was weak. The fight began when Greek heavy-armed troops attacked the Persians at a run and routed them on both wings. The Athenian line was broken at the center, but this did not help the Persians because the Greeks closed both wings in upon the center and drove the remaining Persian soldiers back to their ships. The victorious Athenians attempted to fire the vessels when they reached them, but the Persians weighed anchor before much damage could be done. It was a complete victory for the Athenians and Plataeans: Persian tactics, hitherto irresistible, had been successfully countered by Miltiades. Six thousand four hundred Persians were killed, while Greek losses were only one hundred and ninety-two.

The Persian fleet (which was manned mostly by Phoenicians) did not sail home after the battle, but immediately made for Athens in an effort to reach the unguarded city before the Greeks had a chance to return. The move was a failure, for the troops which had fought at Marathon returned and occupied defensive positions before the Persians arrived. No landing was attempted, and the fleet sailed home to Asia.

There were recriminations among the Greeks after the battle, for some Athenians accused the Alcmaeonid family of sending a signal to the Persians by means of a polished shield. Herodotus defends this family by pointing out that it had expelled Hippias by bribing the oracle and that Cleisthenes was the founder of Athenian democracy. He does not deny that a shield was raised to signal the enemy, but he vigorously refutes the imputation that it was done by a member of this family which would have lost everything had Hippias returned. (The zeal with which Herodotus undertook this defense has led some to believe that he inserted this section to bolster the great Athenian statesman who was an Alcmaeonid, his friend Pericles.)

THE MISFORTUNES OF MILTIADES: The Athenians were jubilant after they had won the Battle of Marathon. They quickly voted ships and money to Miltiades, the hero of Marathon, when he promised to lead them to a (unnamed) place where riches could be obtained at almost no cost to the state. It turned out that Miltiades landed the force at Paros, an island in the Cyclades group famed for its marble. (This incident showed that Athens already had ideas of expansion which were

to cause conflict with Sparta at a later time.) The attempt to conquer Paros failed, and Miltiades himself was wounded.

When Miltiades returned to Athens, he was brought to trial for his life because he had abused the trust of the people. The court decided not to vote a death sentence because of the many services he had performed, but it fined him heavily instead. Miltiades soon died of his wound and the fine was paid by his son, Cimon.

COMMENT: The sixth Book is divided into three sections: 1) the end of the Ionian revolt; 2) the internal affairs of Greece; 3) the Persian expedition to Greece.

The Ionian revolt was essentially over when the city of Miletus fell. Although this city, the main protagonist of rebellion, was treated harshly, the Persians behaved like statesmen after hostilities ended. Each city had to promise that it would not make war upon its neighbor; the Ionian tyrants were deposed, and permission was given to set up democratic forms of government in their place. Persia had learned that tyrants did not necessarily serve its interests best, for Aristagoras and Histiaeus had been the ones to stir up revolution. Darius and Mardonius were willing to allow a certain amount of freedom in internal affairs, and the Ionians appreciated the gesture, as later events were to show.

After the revolt had been put down, Darius showed that he had not forgotten his vow to punish Athens and Eretria for their role in burning Sardis—besides, an invasion of Greece was the next step in the expansion of the Empire. After a campaign under Mardonius was frustrated by the destruction of the fleet at Mount Athos, heralds were sent to demand "earth and water" from Greek cities. When the major powers resisted, preparations for an invasion began in earnest.

In Greece itself, meanwhile, the city-states were still fighting among themselves, but the two most powerful agreed on resistance to Persia. The heralds of Darius were slain in Athens and Sparta; thus reconciliation between them and Persia became impossible. It was due to Cleomenes that Sparta acted in concert with its rival, Athens, against Darius. Despite his antics and his sacrileges, he

had the vision to see that Greece could not survive if the two most powerful European Greek states continued to remain at odds with one another. It was for this reason that Cleomenes helped Athens against Aegina when the latter city—which was very important strategically—medized. When Cleomenes was deposed because he had bribed the Delphian oracle, relations between Sparta and Athens cooled, but hostilities did not erupt between the two states. (This is the second time in the work, incidentally, that Herodotus mentions the bribing of an oracle. Incidents such as these are bound to shake faith in its reliability even before the oracle was discredited during the wars which were to follow.) Despite the passing of Cleomenes, the alliance against Persia was to remain intact.

When a Persian invasion of Greece, ostensibly to punish Athens and Eretria, took place, however, the Spartans stayed away from Marathon for religious reasons. Whether this was merely an excuse or whether Spartan soldiers could have arrived on the scene had they wanted to do so is still a matter of dispute. The fact remains that at Marathon the Athenians defeated a victorious Persian army (it had taken Eretria) of superior numbers almost single-handedly. The battle was all the more significant because it was the first time that European Greeks and Persians had engaged in combat. Herodotus states that heretofore the very name of "Mede" (as the Persians were called in Greece) made the Greeks tremble.

The sixth Book, then, is significant for its description of the unity of Athens and Sparta against Persia, and because it tells about the first Persian incursion into Greece. This invasion was defeated, but it was certain that the powerful Persian Empire would not accept the rebuff as a final verdict.

BOOK VII

POLYMNIA (MUSE OF SACRED MUSIC)

THE ACCESSION OF XERXES: Darius became furious when

news of Marathon reached him, and he swore that he would have vengeance. Every nation subject to the Persian Empire was ordered to begin vigorous preparations for war against Greece. These continued for the next three years, as both army and navy were brought to the peak of readiness. In the fourth year after Marathon, however, a revolt against Persia erupted in Egypt. When an expedition was finally ready to set out against both Greece and Egypt, Darius suddenly died. Xerxes, the eldest son born to him during his reign, ascended to the throne.

DECISION FOR WAR: A question immediately arose as to whether Xerxes would follow his father's plans or would abandon the idea of attacking Greece. After troops were sent out to put down the Egyptian revolt, Xerxes called a meeting of Persian nobles to discuss the matter. The new king arose and declared that Greece must be conquered because of the unprovoked Athenian attack on Sardis and because of the way the Persians had been humbled at Marathon. He also thought that if the Greeks could be defeated, all Europe would be brought under the Persian heel, for no other people on that continent would be able to resist invasion. Mardonius waited until the king had offered his opinion and then proceeded to second it. He declared that the Greeks would rather fight against each other than against Persia; they would surrender when Asian hordes appeared. (Herodotus, speaking through Mardonius, voices his own opinion that disputes among Greeks should be settled peacefully.)

Most of the nobles were silent when the two speakers ended their remarks, but Artabanus, Xerxes' uncle, stated that he was for peace. He had also opposed the Scythian campaign, and events had proven him correct. Now preparations were in progress for a war against a more valiant people. Mardonius' advice was false; the Greeks would not surrender—witness Marathon. (Herodotus thought that Mardonius had hopes of becoming satrap of a Persian-dominated Greece.) Another danger existed. The Greeks could sail to the Hellespont and destroy the projected bridge between Europe and Asia, thus cutting the king's means of retreat. Darius had almost been destroyed in a similar situation in Scythia. Besides these strategic considerations, Artabanus also said that the gods take pleasure in having large forces destroyed at the hands of small armies. Just as lightning always strikes the tallest trees, so the

gods strike those who in their pride raise their heads too high. Xerxes did not appreciate this speech and accused his uncle of cowardice. His decision to invade Greece was reaffirmed.

Despite his preliminary enthusiasm for war, however, Xerxes soon changed his mind and came over to his uncle's point of view. But when he had decided to rescind his orders, he had a dream in which a man ordered him to invade Greece. Xerxes made light of it and the next day told his subjects to disregard his previous commands. The dream reappeared and this time it threatened him. Xerxes told Artabanus to sleep in his bed in order to see if the same vision would appear. When the dream returned and attempted to put Artabanus' eyes out, the king's uncle withdrew his opposition to the Greek adventure.

PERSIAN MOVEMENTS: When it was finally decided to march against the Greeks, Xerxes moved out at the head of an army the like of which had never before been seen. All the nations subject to the vast Persian Empire were represented and organized into separate units. These contingents, however, all had Persian commanders. The elite corps of the Persian army consisted of ten thousand soldiers known as the Immortals. They were given this title because when one of them became sick or died, he was immediately replaced, so the number always remained constant.

The Persian army marched through Asia Minor towards the Hellespont, for the route to Greece was to be the northerly one (through Thrace) followed by Mardonius a number of years before. Army engineers planned to put a floating bridge across the Hellespont in order to allow the troops to pass into Europe. On the first attempt to bridge the strait, however, a storm grew up and scattered the ships which were needed to complete the structure. Xerxes fell into a rage when he heard of this. He ordered his men to punish the Hellespont by giving it three hundred and sixty lashes and by throwing a pair of fetters into the water. The sea calmed after this demonstration of the Persian monarch's pride, and two bridges were built over the strait.

It took seven days and seven nights, according to Herodotus, for the troops to cross into Europe. Despite the size of his

army, however, there were portents that Xerxes' mission would not succeed. Before he had even left Asia, the Great King had dreamed that he was crowned with an olive wreath which then proceeded to disappear. When he crossed the Hellespont, a mare gave birth to a hare. The dream meant that Xerxes would take Athens (for the olive tree was sacred to that city), and then lose it. The second portent meant that while the expedition had begun with so much pride and pomp, the king would retreat running like a hare. (Both these and other portents were doubtless manufactured either by the author or by legend.)

The army halted its march at the Thracian town of Doriscus, where it was reviewed and counted. This was done by having ten thousand men stand as closely as possible while a circle was traced around them. A wall was then built on the outline of the circle, and soldiers were counted in lots of ten thousand. (The number arrived at was not the final one because more men were forced into the army as the march continued.)

After the army and fleet had been reviewed, Xerxes turned and asked Demaratus—the former Spartan king had become a Persian adviser—whether the people of Sparta would resist a force such as his. Demaratus answered that the Greeks, although poor, cultivated courage. As far as the Spartans were concerned, they would fight if all the Greeks surrendered to the Persians, even if they only had a thousand men to put into the field. Xerxes disagreed with him, for, he said, the Greeks did not have a single master, as the Persians did, to lash them into battle. Only in that case would they fight against superior odds —otherwise they would never stand against him. Demaratus said that although the Spartans were free, they did have a master: law. Their law ordered them to conquer or die, no matter what the odds against them. Xerxes could not conceive of free men fighting of their own free will without a master and laughed as he said that Demaratus was speaking nonsense.

As the army of Xerxes continued moving towards Greece, he had the comfort of knowing that no problem would be encountered by the fleet at Mount Athos this time, for a canal had been dug through the peninsula on which the treacherous mountain is found. Herodotus considered this feat another sign

of Xerxes' pride, because he thought the neck of land in the rear of the mountain was narrow enough for the ships to have been dragged overland.

The army moved through Thrace into Thessaly. Thessalian exiles had previously told Xerxes that a move into their homeland would be welcomed. A Greek army had already landed in the region, but it withdrew when it recognized the impossibility of the strategic situation. The Thessalian people, thus deprived of protection, submitted to Xerxes. Thessaly was not the only region in Greece to surrender to the Persians without a fight, for heralds sent out by the invaders brought back "earth and water" from many other Greeks. Heralds were not sent to Athens and Sparta, however, because these cities had had the messengers sent by Darius killed.

THE ATHENIAN REACTION: When the Athenians learned that the Persians were coming to attack Greece, they sent to the oracle at Delphi to ask what should be done. The answer of the priestess was frightening: Athens would be destroyed, she said, and nothing could save it; the people must flee to distant lands: Xerxes would conquer all. The Athenian envoys were dismayed by this, but they did not abandon hope. They asked for a better pronouncement from the god. In response to this, the envoys were told, in an ambiguous statement, that Athens' salvation lay in a "wooden wall." This news was taken to the city.

There was disagreement among the leaders as to just what was meant by the "wooden wall." Some thought that it meant that resistance should be offered from Athens' Acropolis, for the citadel had once been protected by a wooden barricade. Others, the leader of whom was the statesman Themistocles, insisted that the "wooden wall" referred to the fleet. The foundations of a powerful Athenian navy had been laid earlier when Themistocles prevailed upon the government to build two hundred ships for war against Aegina. Already having this start, the advice of Themistocles was accepted, and Athens prepared to meet the Persians on the sea.

This decision, according to Herodotus, was crucial because Greece was saved by means of the Athenian fleet. It was his opinion that all Greece would have been lost had the Athenians

attempted to meet the enemy on land or had they accepted the first pronouncement of the Delphian oracle. It would have been impossible for the Lacedaemonians (Spartans) to defeat Xerxes had his navy remained intact. No doubt they would have valiantly defended the Isthmus, which was the entrance to their peninsular homeland, but the enemy fleet, had it remained powerful, would have attacked them from the south. Since the Athenians finally defeated the Persian fleet (they were the backbone of the combined Greek navy), they made it impossible for Xerxes to continue his campaign in Greece on such a large scale, for, in addition to purely strategic considerations, supplies for the large army depended upon Persian control of the sea.

THE GREEKS SEARCH FOR ALLIES: The Greeks had sent spies to Xerxes' camp while he was still in Asia. Discovered and sentenced to death by the Persians, these men were saved by Xerxes who showed them his vast armament and sent them home in the expectation that all the Greeks would surrender when they heard of the forces about to be hurled against them. Those Greek cities which had decided on resistance, however, did not give in, but sent requests for aid to the most important neutrals. These states were four: Argos, Crete, Corcyra, and Sicily.

Aid was not received from any of these countries. Argos (located in Peloponnese) was still recovering from a recent war with Sparta. The city had asked the oracle at Delphi for advice, and the priestess counseled neutrality. Nevertheless, Argos promised to help the Greeks if Sparta would grant her thirty years' peace and half the leadership in the coming war. Sparta refused to accede to the request for leadership, and so no aid was granted. This, at least, was the Argive version. Herodotus reports that the other Greeks thought Argos had accepted Xerxes' offer to spare the city if it remained neutral.

Crete wavered when the call for help arrived, and when it received a pronouncement from the oracle to remain neutral, proceeded to do so. The action of the people of Corcyra (now the island of Corfu) was shameful. Corcyra was a considerable sea power at the time, and it manned sixty ships when the Greek envoys asked for aid. These ships, however, were ordered to delay their arrival until the issue between Greece

and Persia was decided. If Persia won, the commanders were instructed to say that they had refrained from attacking, even though their power was formidable; and if the Greeks won, they were to say that a storm had prevented their arrival in time for battle.

A Greek embassy was also sent to seek aid from Gelo, the tyrant of Syracuse. Gelo had about half of the Sicilian Greeks under him and his country was reputed to be more powerful than any state in Greece. As soon as the envoys arrived, a dispute arose about the leadership, Gelo demanding at first sole, and later joint, command. When both requests were refused, he declared no help would be sent from Sicily. Gelo had troubles of his own at home, and these probably accounted for the refusal to help Greece. The Phoenicians of North Africa, doubtless in concert with Xerxes, were attacking the Sicilian Greeks while the Persians were marching on Greece. They were defeated in Sicily at the same time that Persia was worsted in a sea-battle around the island of Salamis.

THERMOPYLAE CHOSEN: The Greeks had to see to their defense without the help of allies. A narrow pass which led into southern Greece at Thermopylae was chosen as the spot where Greek forces would offer battle to the Persians. A guard was posted at a path which the defenders realized could be used to encircle them, but much thought was not given to this factor. The terrain was such that the Persians could not make use of their cavalry, and the Greeks set about mending an old defensive wall across the pass. In order to coordinate troop and fleet movements, the combined Greek fleet assembled at nearby Artemisium, on the northern coast of Euboea. Skirmishes at sea began almost immediately.

CAPE SEPIAS: The main Persian fleet remained north of Artemisium at Cape Sepias in Thessaly. It was there that a great storm suddenly came up and destroyed four hundred out of the 1,207 ships which formed the vast fleet. The Greeks had prayed to the winds, and they wrecked a great number of enemy ships as they had done at Mount Athos a number of years before.

THE PERSIAN FORCE: Herodotus greatly exaggerated the num-

ber of men, both in the army and the navy, who took part in this invasion of Greece. He calculated that a total of 5,283,220 participated in the expedition, excluding women and eunuchs. It was thus no wonder to him that many rivers should have been drunk dry by this vast force. (The Persian force is now estimated to have included about 750 ships and 300,000 troops and attendants.)

THE BATTLE OF THERMOPYLAE: When the huge Persian army came to the pass at Thermopylae, it found about five thousand Greeks ready to dispute the passage into southern Greece. Of these soldiers, only three hundred were Spartans, for the Lacedaemonians were celebrating a religious festival (the same one they had celebrated during the Battle of Marathon) and would allow only an advance guard to proceed to the pass. More troops were to follow later.

When the two armies engaged, the Persians were surprised at the fight displayed by the small Greek force which was commanded by Leonidas, a Spartan king (who was the half-brother of Cleomenes). For three days the Greeks repulsed attacks by the Persians. The pass being defended was narrow, and Persian numbers could not be brought to bear; even the elite Immortals were roughly handled by the Greeks.

Xerxes could not see how to force the passage when a Greek named Ephialtes came to him and offered to tell of a path which could be used to encircle the defending force. Ephialtes —he stands strongly condemned by Herodotus—-then consented to guide the Persians. A thousand troops guarded the path, but when they saw the enemy come upon them, they fled for cover and prepared to make a stand. The Persians and their guide, however, were not interested in them, and they moved toward the main force, ignoring the defenders.

When word of the Persian breakthrough reached Leonidas, he realized that the situation was hopeless and he dismissed all his troops except the Thebans, whose loyalty was suspect. (Thebes had, in fact, medized. The troops were forced to fight against the Persians.) The Spartans, along with seven hundred soldiers from the city of Thespiae who had refused to leave, made preparations for a last stand. Leonidas remembered that an oracle

had warned that either Sparta or one of its kings would be destroyed by the Persians. When Leonidas saw that he was trapped, the truth of the oracle dawned upon him. Either he or Sparta would have to perish, and so he chose not to escape.

The Spartans and Thespians resisted stubbornly before they were overwhelmed, and many heroic deeds are recorded by Herodotus. All the defenders were killed. The exasperation which the Greeks had caused Xerxes was shown when he had Leonidas' head cut off and his body impaled. Such an action was out of character for Persians, for Herodotus states that they honored brave fallen enemies.

After the battle, Xerxes called Demaratus and asked his advice on how the war should be conducted from then on. Demaratus advised Xerxes to take the island of Cythera (off the southern coast of the Peloponnesian peninsula) and, using it as a base, to attack Sparta from the rear. The Persian admiral caused this sound advice to be refused by the king.

COMMENT: The seventh Book of the *Histories* describes the beginning of Persia's intensive effort to conquer Greece. Greece itself was still being rent by wars between its several states when news of the impending Persian attack was heard in the peninsula. The Greeks who refused to submit to Xerxes called a halt to their own disputes and vowed to resist the invader. It was clear that they thought of the struggle as one fought between the Greek and the Persian way of life, as one between freedom and slavery.

Herodotus thought that fate spurred the son of Darius to war on Greece. Xerxes had decided not to attack the Greeks, but a dream came to him and ordered him to do so in forceful tones. This theme—that fate cannot be escaped—is a recurring one throughout the *Histories*.

There were signs that Xerxes' campaign against Greece would fail—a mare gave birth to a hare, and Xerxes had dreamed about being crowned with an olive wreath which disappeared. These and other portents were supposed to have forewarned the Great King that his expedition would

be a failure, no matter how splendidly it began. No use: he plunged forward.

Xerxes' armament was indeed impressive, despite the very large errors in Herodotus' estimates. Such great power which Xerxes wielded could not but make him proud, and pride (this is another theme which is found throughout the work) is punished. The Persian monarch showed his pride in many ways. He was so haughty that he expected all Greece to surrender rather than to stand up to him. He fully expected that not only Greece but all Europe would be conquered by his arms. He was also so arrogant as to "punish" the Hellespont by having it lashed.

His plans were frustrated despite his early victories. Herodotus, giving a preview of the action to come in the following Books, ascribes the defeat of Xerxes to Athens. It is his contention—and it is logical—that Persia could not have been defeated by land. The Spartans would probably have resisted valiantly, but the peninsula which they inhabited would have been attacked from the rear, and a complete defeat for Greece would have been inevitable. Athens, on the other hand, not only made the correct choice by concentrating all its resources at sea, but its people were also brave enough not to desert the common cause because of a terrifying oracle from Delphi. (This and other unfavorable oracles were to shake their confidence in Delphi.)

Some critics have sought to attribute Herodotus' partiality to Athens to the fact that he was paid by the city while he was working on the *Histories*. Although he lectured in Athens, did much research there, and saw the city as the standard-bearer of Greek civilization, his arguments as to the strategic value of Athenian sea power are perfectly valid.

The Athenian decision to concentrate on sea power was crucial, for the might which was brought to bear against Greece on land was indeed tremendous. Mobilization of Persian resources had continued for a number of years, and no one imagined that the Greeks could resist such

overwhelming power. After the defeat of the heroic Greek force at Thermopylae (480 B.C.), Persian victory seemed assured, for the road to southern Greece was open.

BOOK VIII

URANIA (MUSE OF ASTRONOMY)

ARTEMISIUM: The Battle of Themopylae which ended so victoriously for the Persians was only one phase of the Graeco-Persian encounter in central Greece, for there was also action at sea. A combined Greek fleet had sailed to Artemisium with orders to frustrate any attempt by the Persian navy to attack the defenders of Thermopylae from the sea. Two actions, fought while the forces on land were disputing the pass, are recorded by Herodotus. Eurybiades, a Spartan, was chosen to command the Greek fleet of two hundred seventy-one triremes (ships with three banks of oars) because the allies refused to follow an Athenian, although the contingent from Athens was the fleet's backbone.

After discussion among the Greeks as to whether they should stay and meet the superior enemy fleet at all, the opposing forces engaged. (Herodotus states that Themistocles, the Athenian commander, was bribed by the Euboeans to convince the other admirals to make a stand.) Thirty Persian ships were taken before the first action was completed. The gods seemed to be even more wholeheartedly on the side of the Greeks by the time morning dawned. It had been learned from a deserter that two hundred Persian ships were on their way around the island of Euboea in an attempt to encircle the Greeks, but no sign of these ships was seen during the first sea-battle off Artemisium. During the night a violent storm hit the area. The Persian triremes which had been sent around the island were caught in the open and completely destroyed. Because of this disaster and the earlier one at Cape Sepias, the number of ships which Xerxes had brought with him to attack Greece was reduced from one thousand two hundred and seven to about six hundred.

When the two fleets engaged again, the Greeks destroyed many

enemy ships, but this time they suffered heavy losses themselves. Word of Leonidas' fate reached the fleet after this encounter, and the Greek force launched its ships and withdrew.

THE PERSIAN ADVANCE: The road to southern Greece was now open by both land and sea, and Xerxes' army resumed its march after the king had invited the sailors to view the battlefield of Thermopylae. Bursting in upon the region of Phocis, the Persians devastated it after being told by Thessalian informers that the Phocians were solidly opposed to them. Next the army was divided into two parts; one went to Boeotia and one advanced upon Delphi. The region of Boeotia was spared when the Persians learned that the cities in the area had "medized." Delphi, Herodotus reports, was miraculously saved when two peaks of a mountain broke off and rolled down upon the Persian attackers. (This legend was probably invented by the priests of that city. It was not a Persian policy to destroy the most famous sacred shrines. Besides, it has been maintained that Persian diplomacy was active in the city even before the invasion.) The Persian army moved south in the direction of Athens after Phocis and Boeotia had been occupied.

No resistance was offered the Persians on land as the main Greek army withdrew to the Peloponnesian peninsula, abandoning Athens. The Greek ships which had sailed from Artemisium put in at Salamis, a small island off the Athenian coast. Athens was then evacuated, ships taking the people to Salamis. Only a few men refused to leave the city and prepared to resist the Persians from the Acropolis, the crag on which the chief temples of the city were located.

The Greek fleet which assembled at Salamis was larger than that which had fought at Artemisium, due to the addition of more units. Three hundred and seventy-eight triremes and some smaller ships now made up the Grecian navy.

ATHENS TAKEN: While the Greeks converged on the island of Salamis, the Persians took Athens. Opposition to the invaders came only from the diehards who had occupied the Acropolis. They had built a wooden barricade for protection in the belief that this was the "wooden wall" in which the Delphian oracle had promised salvation. Undismayed, the Persians laid seige

and shot fire-arrows at the structure. After a heroic defense, the rock was scaled, the defenders killed, and the temples set on fire. After this sacrilege was committed, however, Xerxes told some Athenian exiles who were in his train to go to the Acropolis to offer sacrifices.

SALAMIS: When news of the occupation of Athens and the burning of the Acropolis reached Salamis, many units of the fleet prepared for a withdrawal. After a council of admirals convened, it was decided to sail to the Isthmus (the narrow entrance to the Peloponnese). A wall was being built across this Isthmus, and the Grecian army was taking up defensive positions at that point. The argument was put forward that the fleet would be fighting in defense of unoccupied land at the Isthmus, while nothing could be done at sea to free Attica (the region in which Athens was located). Besides, if the fleet were defeated at Salamis, the remaining units would be bottled up in a bay, unable to prevent Peloponnesian shores from being ravaged by the enemy.

Although Themistocles at first went along with this plan, he was convinced (so Herodotus maintains) by a fellow-citizen named Mnesiphilus that it would be better not to abandon Salamis, for the fleet ran the risk of disbanding before it reached the Isthmus. Themistocles took Mnesiphilus' advice and persuaded Eurybiades to call another council. At that meeting, the Athenian gave his reasons for advocating a fight at Salamis. If the fleet withdrew to the Isthmus, it would be abandoning what remained of free Greece north of that point, including Salamis and the Athenian dependents. Considerable powers such as Aegina, which heretofore had fought on the Greek side, would be forced to go over to the invader. Besides the consequent additions to the might of the Persians, a naval battle at the Isthmus would put the Greeks against superior numbers of faster ships in open waters. Action in the narrow straits around Salamis, on the other hand, would make Persian numbers unavailing. Themistocles also ventured the opinion that if the Persian fleet were defeated, the Persians would not continue their advance, but would retire. Finally Themistocles threatened to use his two hundred ships to ferry the Athenian people to a new home in Italy if the council did not take his advice to fight at Salamis.

Confronted with an Athenian threat to desert the common cause, Eurybiades consented to meet the enemy armada in the waters off Salamis. The supreme commander realized that the Grecian navy would be rendered practically impotent if the Athenian contribution were withdrawn.

THE PERSIAN COUNCIL: Xerxes, meanwhile, had called all his naval commanders together and asked them if battle at sea should be offered the Greeks. It was plain that the Great King wished to make short work of the Greek fleet, for his own naval forces outnumbered the triremes at the disposal of the Greeks. Despite the heavy losses suffered at Cape Sepias and Euboea, the Persian fleet had been again brought up to full strength by the addition of naval units from the many Greek cities which had medized after the Battle of Thermopylae. (Or so Herodotus maintains. By the time of the council, however, the Persians had lost about eight hundred vessels, a number which the medizing Greeks could not have supplied. In all probability the Persian fleet numbered six hundred ships.) Xerxes thought that his men had not gained the victory at Artemisium because he was not on the scene; at Salamis his presence would terrify them into winning.

All the commanders agreed with the king, except for Artemisia, the woman who was tyrant of Halicarnarssus. Artemisia advised waiting for an opportunity to meet the Greeks in open waters, where the natural superiority of the Persian fleet could be brought to bear. She was overruled. (Herodotus proudly exaggerates the prowess and wisdom of the tyrant of his native city throughout this Book.)

THE ENGAGEMENT: Despite Eurybiades' decision to engage the enemy at Salamis, the men of the fleet who came from south of the Isthmus thought it the height of foolishness to fight for a land already lost. It began to look as if they might get permission to sail for more southerly waters. Themistocles accordingly sent a message to the Persians informing them that the Greeks were about to flee in terror, and that positions must be taken immediately if they hoped to prevent a Greek escape and win an overwhelming victory. He added that he himself was secretly hoping for a Persian success. The Persians acted upon this information, and soon reports of encirclement

reached the Greeks: the ruse had worked. Finding all routes of escape cut off, the Greek fleet was forced to fight at Salamis.

It turned out that Themistocles' estimates had been correct. The Persians could not make use of their numbers in the straits, and the heavier Greek ships were able to ram them at close quarters. The battle resulted in a complete victory for the Greeks, although the Persian force, the bulk of whose ships were manned by Phoenicians, Egyptians, and Ionians, fought well. On the Greek side, it was agreed that the Aeginetan sailors gave the best account of themselves. The Athenians came second in valor, and the Corinthians—hated and much maligned by the Athenians—also fought valiantly.

RESULTS OF THE BATTLE: The far reaching results of the Battle of Salamis were not at first discerned by the Greeks. Defeated at sea, the Great King ran the risk of being cut off from his kingdom and of having his supply routes interrupted. Although disguising his intentions, Xerxes decided to withdraw, leaving Mardonius with three hundred thousand troops in Greece. (The figure is that mentioned by Herodotus, but about eighty thousand would be more appropriate.) Xerxes' ostensible objective in invading Greece—punishing Athens for the raid on Sardis—had been achieved, and so he felt he could retire without too much loss of prestige.

THE CHASE: When the Persian fleet withdrew, the Greeks followed as far as the Cyclades, but from there the fleet refused to go on despite Themistocles' urging. Themistocles then suggested sailing to the Hellespont and destroying the bridges which were Xerxes' means of escape. Eurybiades vetoed this idea, saying that he preferred to help rather than to hinder the hostile army's flight from Greece.

The Athenians (independently of their allies) then proceeded to demand tribute from the islands of the Cyclades group on the pretext that it was a punishment for their having medized. They insisted upon being given the money in the name of two gods, Persuasion and Force, and besieged any island which refused their demands (such as Andros, which rebuffed them in the name of the gods Poverty and Incapacity).

THE PERSIAN RETREAT: Xerxes was returning to Asia while

Themistocles was pursuing this action in the Aegean. The king had begun his retreat after allowing Mardonius to have his pick of the troops he wanted to remain with him in Greece. Xerxes' retreating forces did not have an easy march to the Hellespont, but suffered from hunger and dysentery. After Xerxes had safely returned to Asia, Artabazus, commander of the army corps which had escorted the king, marched back to rejoin Mardonius, who had abandoned southern Greece and was spending the winter in Thessaly. On his return, Artabazus attempted to subdue several Thracian towns which had revolted after the Persian defeat at Salamis, but had only moderate success.

The Persian fleet also withdrew to Asia after the Battle of Salamis. After wintering at Cyme (on the coast of Asia Minor) the fleet converged upon Samos and remained in Ionian waters in order to guard against a revolt in that part of the Empire. Although the navy then was comprised of about three hundred vessels, it accepted its defeat at the hands of the Greeks and was unwilling to precipitate a major engagement. Nor would the Greek fleet undertake an offensive action while Persian troops remained on Grecian soil. It sailed eastward, but only as far as the island of Delos.

AN ALLIANCE OFFERED TO ATHENS: The battle front was quiet during the winter after Salamis, and interest centered on diplomatic maneuverings. The Greeks thought it politic to send the customary share of the spoils of war to Delphia and other shrines as a thank-offering to the gods. Even Mardonius sent messengers to seek advice from the powerful gods of Greece. Mardonius, however, also took positive diplomatic action. He sent Alexander, King of Macedon, with a proposal to Athens. He offered the city its homeland, its freedom, and the choice of any additional territory it desired, provided it came to an agreement with Xerxes. The Spartans were fearful that the offer would be accepted and sent an offer to support Athenian dependents at their own (and their allies') expense. The Athenians, however, rejected both the offer of alliance with Persia and support from Sparta. They asked the Spartans to send troops north at once, before Mardonius had a chance to invade Attica again.

COMMENT: Book VIII deals with the events leading up

to, and the results of, the most famous battle of the Persian wars: Salamis. After Thermopylae it seemed as if Xerxes' invading forces would sweep everything before them. All Greece north of the Isthmus, which included Athens itself, had been abandoned to the enemy, and although the Greek fleet had fought well at Artemisium, it had been forced to retire with heavy losses. As both Persian army and armada began moving south with a force which seemed irresistible, many more cities threw in their lot with the invader. (Most Greek cities had medizing parties within their walls, and the Persian victories strengthened their hand.)

At Salamis, however, the back of the invasion was broken. The Persians made a serious tactical error by engaging the Greeks in the straits around Salamis island, for their light, fast warships should have been used to full advantage in open waters. Greek triremes, on the other hand, were heavier, slower, and carried heavy-armed marines: excellent for the ramming and boarding techniques used in narrow waters. Losses during the battle emphasize the enormity of the mistake—estimates of Persian ships destroyed were put as high as five hundred. (This number is from another source, for Herodotus does not give any estimate of the losses. The Greeks were said to have lost only forty vessels.)

Herodotus gives us to understand that the pride of Xerxes was in large measure to blame for the naval disaster which forced him to retire from Greece. Though warned that his fleet would perform better in open waters, he disregarded all tactical reasoning and insisted that his sailors had not done well under similar conditions at Artemisium because he was not there to watch the action, a mistake he proposed to remedy at Salamis. He felt his presence would inspire a brilliant victory on the part of his men because they would fear the consequences of a defeat. This points up a difference between the two opposing forces. The Greeks—and they felt this keenly—were fighting as free men while the Phoenician and Ionian sailors were fighting for the Persians as slaves. Herodotus, indeed, thought that even the Persians were slaves to an absolute master, the king.

Interestingly enough, the hero of Salamis, Themistocles, is treated not as a man worthy of having borne so sacred a trust as the preservation of Greek liberty, but as a scoundrel. Everything he does for the Greek cause is just about negated by some unscrupulous deed. Was he acting as a hero when he convinced the fleet to stay and fight at Artemisium? No, he was bribed. Was it not a brilliant piece of strategy to engage the Persian armada at Salamis? Yes, but he was acting on advice given to him by Mnesiphilus. Was he being a patriot when he forced islands in the Cyclades to support the Greek war effort after they had helped the Persians? No, he was being a pirate. Most commentators believe that Herodotus betrayed his own bias (or that of his sources) in his treatment of Themistocles.

Herodotus' description of Themistocles' Cyclades expedition may be taken as a preview of future Athenian expansion, which was to be the prime cause of the Peloponnesian wars just beginning to rage in the historian's own lifetime. It was only a foreshadowing, however, for even after Salamis, defense, and not expansion, was still the Greeks' primary concern.

BOOK IX

CALLIOPE (MUSE OF EPIC POETRY)

When Mardonius received word that Athens had rejected his offer of an alliance, he marched south with the aim of recapturing the city. He forced the cities along his line of march to give him troops, and it was estimated that fifty thousand Greek soldiers were incorporated into his army by the time he reached Attica. The Thessalians and the Thebans rendered him all the aid they could, the latter advising him to bribe the leaders of the chief cities aligned against him. Mardonius, however, was too proud to stoop to such means.

SPARTAN PROCRASTINATION: The Athenians, who again abandoned their city when they heard of Mardonius' approach, sent appeals for help to the Spartans. Their envoys reminded

the Spartans that the Athenians had refused to desert the Greek cause when an alliance was offered them by the Persians. Now the Spartans were delaying instead of rushing troops north as quickly as possible. The excuse offered was that a festival was being celebrated; but could it be that the Spartans felt secure now that a wall blocked the entrance to the Peloponnese? If so, let them beware, for if the Athenians reconsidered the Persian offer, as, perhaps, they were now doing, their fleet would make the wall useless.

This was the message of the envoys. After being put off for a number of days, the Spartan government informed them that five thousand soldiers and thirty-five thousand Helots (Spartan serfs, many of whom acted as light-armed troops) under Pausanias had already left the city, and that a like number were ready to march.

ATHENS DESTROYED: The Argivés had undertaken to stop any Spartan troops leaving for battle against the Persians, but their only action was to send warning of the departure to Mardonius. The Persian commander was in Athens, but he had not devastated it because he had renewed his offer of alliance with the city. Learning that Peloponnesian troops were marching against him, he destroyed what remained of Athens (Xerxes had burned the Acropolis) and retired to Boeotia.

PLATAEA: When Mardonius reached the region of Boeotia, he had a wooden fort built between Plataea and Thebes. This was to serve as a base and as a place of refuge if the forthcoming battle with the Greeks did not go well for the Persians. It was learned at a banquet held at the medizing city of Thebes that some Persians had a premonition that they were foredoomed. Perhaps there was a loss of confidence among the Persian leaders and low morale among the soldiers.

POSITIONS OF THE ARMIES: The Persian army took up positions along the bank of a river in the area, the Asopus. The ground which it held was flat and therefore suitable for action by the formidable Persian cavalry. When the Greek soldiers arrived, they established a line facing the Persians on the opposite bank of the river. The terrain there was unsuitable for cavalry action, but favorable for the hoplites (heavy-armed troops) who were the backbone of the combined Greek army.

The objective of both forces, then, was to lure the enemy across the river. Whichever army undertook the offensive would be at a disadvantage because it would find itself on the type of ground most favorable to the enemy. Diviners with both armies confirmed this strategical reasoning by finding omens which were repeatedly favorable for defense, but not for offense.

It was while the armies were in this position that the Greeks came into contact with the dreaded Persian horse. Soldiers from the city of Megara were guarding the part of the line most exposed to cavalry attack. They were being cut to pieces when the Athenians came to the rescue. During a hard fight, the Persian commander, Masistius, was thrown from his wounded horse, and the Athenians managed to kill him. Left without a leader, the horsemen broke off the engagement. The Greeks were overjoyed at this proof that they could successfully withstand a cavalry charge and displayed the body of the Persian leader to their soldiers.

The Greek command next decided to move the army to more forward positions, though not across the Asopus. When the new positions were reached, an argument ensued between the Athenians and the soldiers from Tegea as to who should hold the left wing. Both forces recounted mythical and historical examples of their prowess, but the choice finally went to the Athenians because of the feat they had performed at Marathon. Spartan soldiers took the right wing, the Tegeans were posted next to them, and the allies held the center. Herodotus believed that the whole Greek force consisted of one hundred and ten thousand men, thirty-eight thousand seven hundred of them heavy-armed.

The opposing line was so organized that the Persians themselves, who were the best troops in the army, were placed opposite the Spartans. Their Greek allies were ordered opposite the Athenians while the Asiatic allies held the center. Herodotus estimated the Persian force at three hundred thousand, excluding the fifty thousand Greeks. (Again the numbers are exaggerated. The opposing forces were approximately equal.)

The two armies remained inactive for a number of days, for both were unwilling to venture across the river separating them. Mardonius then received intelligence that the Greek army was

growing day by day as more soldiers streamed to join it. A council was held by the general to hear the opinions of his men as to what should be done. Artabazus, one of the most influential leaders, advised withdrawing to the safety of Thebes, and from there to conduct a campaign of bribery to buy the Greeks' freedom. Mardonius overruled his lieutenant and insisted that he had confidence in the ability of his soldiers to gain the victory. A battle, he concluded, must be joined immediately, despite the unfavorable omens.

This decision of Mardonius was relayed to the Athenians by Alexander of Macedon. When the Spartan leader, Pausanias, heard that an attack was imminent, he began to panic. He asked the Athenians to change positions with him because they had had the experience of fighting the Persians while the Spartans had not (all the Spartans who had fought at Thermopylae perished). The Athenians agreed to the change, but when the Persians discovered what had been done, they also changed positions so as to be facing the Spartans. Pausanias again moved to his original position when he saw what the Persians had done, but to no avail, for the Persian troops also moved back. Mardonius was encouraged by these movements on the part of the most valued Greek soldiers and issued a challenge to the Spartans, which, however, went unaccepted. (This tale told by Herodotus is beyond belief. No doubt there were maneuvers by the Greeks, but fear of the Persians was not the reason for them. Such behavior on the part of the Spartans would have been unprecedented and did not conform to their later conduct in the battle. Moves such as those which Herodotus attributes to the recognized military leaders of Greece would have utterly demoralized the Grecian army.)

In conformity with his plan of attack, Mardonius unleashed his horsemen on the Greeks. The cavalry made the Greek position so untenable that a decision to retreat to more favorable ground was taken. The withdrawal was attempted under the cover of night, but the morning found the parts of the Greek army separated from each other because the center had panicked. When Mardonius heard that the Greeks were pulling back, he thought they were in headlong retreat and immediately led his whole army across the Asopus for the chase.

THE GREEK VICTORY: The Persians were too eager for vic-

tory: their advance was disordered. Greeks and Persians were soon fighting at close quarters, a factor which gave the skilled hoplites the advantage because the Persians wore no armor and could not make use of their cavalry. The Greeks, however, by no means had an easy time of it, for the Persians fought stubbornly while Mardonius was alive. When Mardonius was killed, the Persians fled.

The retreat soon became a rout, despite the interposition of the cavalry. On the left wing most of the Persians' Greek allies had speedily deserted when the fight began, but the Boeotians remained and put up stiff resistance against their old enemies, the Athenians. The Boeotians were also forced to retreat, and soon the whole Persian force was fleeing for the fort Mardonius had built.

A bitter struggle took place at the fort, and the Spartans were held back until the Athenians arrived. It was they who breached the wall. Once this last defense of the Persians was gone, the Greeks slaughtered them. Only three thousand—and Artabazus' force of forty thousand which, however, had fled when the battle began to go badly for the Persians—survived the day.

After the battle was over and the spoils of war were distributed, the Greeks decided to punish the leaders who had caused Thebes to medize. Thebes was beseiged until the demand was met. The surrendered leaders were put to death.

MYCALE: On the same day that the Greeks won the stunning victory of Plataea, the Grecian fleet carried out a successful offensive operation at Mycale (on the coast of Asia Minor, opposite Samos.)

Ever since the Battle of Salamis the fleet had remained inactive at Delos and did not cruise to Ionian waters. Action was finally taken when messengers arrived from Samos to ask aid in liberation from the Persian yoke. The envoys promised that the Ionians would rise up against the Persians once Greek forces arrived in the area. Leotychides, the Spartan supreme commander, satisfied himself as to the truth of this information, received reports of favorable omens from the diviners, and sailed for Ionia.

The Persian fleet was stationed at Samos when the Greeks decided to challenge it. After Salamis, however, the Persians were in no mood to risk another encounter at sea, especially since now the Ionians were not trustworthy. Phoenician units were sent home while the other vessels sailed to Mycale and were beached. Sixty thousand army troops were available for combat at Mycale if the Greek ships disembarked soldiers.

The first action of the Greeks was to appeal to the Ionians serving with the Persians. Suspicion was aroused among the Persians, so they disarmed the Samians and sent the Milesians out of their lines on a mission, but these managed to help the Greeks nonetheless. When the Greeks landed, they utterly defeated the Persian force and burned the warships. Persian military and naval power in Ionia was broken.

Herodotus reports that during the Battle of Mycale a rumor that the Greeks were winning at Plataea suddenly started in the Greek ranks. Believing it to have been the work of a god, Greek soldiers found their morale lifted by it and fought a good battle.

THE GREEKS IN ASIA: There was a debate between the Peloponnesians and the Athenians as to what should be done with Ionia. The Peloponnesians wanted to expel the medizing Greeks and settle the Ionians in Greece, a plan which was vigorously opposed by the Athenians. Islands such as Samos, Chios, and Lesbos finally joined the league of Athens' allies.

The combined Greek fleet sailed to the Hellespont with the intention of destroying the bridges over the strait when the debate ended. Finding the bridges already gone, the Greek force split up, for the Spartans sailed homeward while the Athenians attempted the conquest of the Chersonese. The town of Sestos was beseiged and finally taken. The Persian governor was crucified by the Greeks because he had desecrated the shrine of Protesilaus, a Greek hero of the Trojan War.

COMMENT: The last Book of the *Histories* describes the complete defeat of the Persian attempt to subdue Greece, as well as the offensive action taken by the Greek navy on the shores of Asia Minor.

The Battle of Plataea brought the threat against Greece to an end as the powerful Persian army under Mardonius was annihilated, Persian power in Ionia was also broken after the Battle of Mycale.

The treatment of these two battles by Herodotus demonstrates the large part religion had in ancient life. Neither Greek nor Persian army at Plataea would move while the omens were against it. In assuming the offensive, Mardonius overruled his Greek diviner, and he was defeated. It was a common practice in the ancient world for diviners to go along with armies in order to advise their leaders by interpreting signs from the gods. At Mycale the gods intervened more directly in the battle by sending an encouraging rumor which buoyed the morale of the Greeks, who, led by the Athenians, went on to score an amazing success.

Throughout the ninth Book Athens is shown as being the spirit of the resistance against Persia, and it was that city which undertook to continue the struggle against the Persian Empire after Mycale.

Just as Athens was represented as the city most responsible for the naval victory of Salamis in the previous Book, it is shown as the soul of the victories in the ninth Book. At Plataea the Athenians were judged as the most fit to oppose the Persians; they were also the first to breach the enemy wall.

It was also the Athenian navy which drove the Persians out of the Chersonese and crucified the Persian governor. This rather harsh punishment (his son was also stoned to death) was inflicted by the Greeks because he had dared to insult the memory of a Greek who was killed during the Trojan War.

Just as he traced the enmity between East and West back to its legendary origins in the beginning of his work, so Herodotus ends the *Histories* with the intermingling of fact and legend. One thing is made clear: just as the Greek hero Protesilaus was revenged on the Persian governor, so Greece was revenged upon Persia.

GLOSSARY

ARISTAGORAS: The tyrant of Miletus who led the revolt of Ionia against Persia.

ARTEMISIUM (BATTLE OF): A naval battle between Greeks and Persians off the northern coast of Euboea (August, 480 B.C.).

ATTICA: The region of Greece in which Athens was located.

BOEOTIA: A region north of Attica whose chief city was Thebes.

CAMBYSES: The Persian king who added Egypt to the Empire.

CAPE SEPIAS: A headland north of Euboea where a storm destroyed a large number of Persian warships in 480 B.C.

CLEISTHENES: The leader who introduced democratic reforms into Athens after the expulsion of the Pisistratids.

CLEOMENES: The Spartan king who helped bring Sparta and Athens together in order to oppose Persia.

CHERSONESE: The peninsula which forms the northern shore of the Hellespont.

CYRUS: The Persian king who overthrew the Median Empire, established the Persians in power, and conquered Lydia, Ionia, and Babylon.

CROESUS: The last monarch of independent Lydia. He was supposed to have been fabulously wealthy.

DARIUS: The Persian king who reorganized the Empire after the death of Cambyses and who invaded Greece after having crushed the Ionian revolt.

DEMARATUS: The Spartan who was co-king with Cleomenes. He was ousted and became an adviser to the Persians.

DELPHI: A Greek city in which was located the most famous oracle of Apollo.

ERETRIA: A city located on Euboea which helped Athens burn Sardis. It was destroyed by the Persians in 490 B.C.

EUBOEA: A large island off the eastern coast of Greece.

HISTIAEUS: The tyrant of Miletus, father-in-law of Aristagoras.

HOPLITE: A Greek heavy-armed soldier.

LADE (BATTLE OF): A naval battle off the Milesian coast in which the Ionians were decisively defeated at sea by Persia, 494 B.C.

MARATHON: A town in Attica near which the Athenians and Plataeans defeated a Persian invading force in 490 B.C.

MARDONIUS: Son-in-law of Darius who conducted military campaigns against Greece. He was killed at Plataea in 479 B.C.

MILTIADES: The Athenian general who was responsible for the victory at Marathon.

MOUNT ATHOS: A treacherous promontory at the eastern tip of a peninsula to the northeast of Greece. A Persian fleet was destroyed while attempting to round it in 492 B.C.

MYCALE (BATTLE OF): The battle in which the Greeks broke the Persian power in Ionia, mid-August, 479 B.C.

PAUSANIAS: The Spartan supreme commander at the Battle of Plataea.

PELOPONNESE: The peninsula on which Sparta, the most important military power in Greece, was located.

PHOENICIANS: A seafaring people originally from the area of what is now Lebanon. They comprised the bulk of the Persian navy.

PISISTRATUS, PISISTRATIDS: The tyrant of Athens and/or his sons and followers.

PLATAEA (BATTLE OF): The battle (in Boeotia) in which a combined Greek force ended the Persian threat in Greece, mid-August, 479 B.C.

SALAMIS (BATTLE OF): The naval battle in the straits around the island of Salamis in which a combined Greek fleet destroyed a Persian fleet of superior numbers, thus forcing Xerxes out of Greece, September, 480 B.C.

SOLON: An Athenian lawgiver and social reformer 594-3 or 592-1 B.C.

SCYTHIANS: Nomadic tribesmen who inhabited what is now part of Rumania and Southwestern Russia.

THEMISTOCLES: The Athenian hero of the Battle of Salamis.

THERMOPYLAE (BATTLE OF): The battle for a pass in central Greece in which all the defending Greek troops were killed by the Persians, August, 480 B.C.

TRIREME: An ancient warship having three banks of oars.

XERXES: The Persian king who led a massive expedition against Greece in 480 B.C.